



Letters
That Have Helped
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LETTERS

THAT

HAVE HELPED ME.



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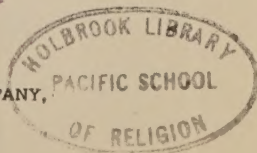
JASPER NIEMAND.

Reprinted from "The Path."

FIFTH EDITION.

159 WARREN ST., B'KLYN, N. Y.

NEW YORK:
THE ALLIANCE PUBLISHING COMPANY,
569 Fifth Avenue.



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WE ARE FREE

To
Z. L. Z.
the Greatest of
the Exiles, and Friend
of all Creatures; from his
Younger Brother, the Compiler.

JASPER NIEMAND,
1891.




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PREFACE.

"Seeking for freedom I go to that God who is the light of his own thoughts. A man who knows him truly passes over death; there is no other path to go."

—*Upanishads.*

N the *Path* for May, 1887, we find these words: "We need a literature, not solely for highly intellectual persons, but of a more simple character, which attempts to appeal to ordinary common-sense minds who are really fainting for such moral and mental assistance as is not reached by the more pretentious works."

The experience of one student is, on the whole, the experience of all. Details differ, however. Some are made more instantly rich than others: they are those who put forth more vigorous and generous effort; or they have a Karmic store which brings aid. What Theosophists know as Karma, or the law of spiritual action and reaction, decides this, as it works on all the planes, physical, moral, mental, psychical, and spiritual alike. Our Karma may be worked out on any one of these planes when our life is chiefly concentrated upon it, no matter upon what other plane any special initiative impulse or branch of it originated.

The writer, when first he became a theosophical student, had the aid of an advanced occultist in his studies. This friend sent him, among others, the letters which, in the hope that they may assist others as they have the original recipient, are here published. They are not exhaustive treatises; they are hints given by one who knew that the first need of a stu-

dent is to learn *how to think*. The true direction is pointed out, and the student is left to clarify his own perceptions, to draw upon and enlarge his own intuitions, and to develop, as every created thing must at last develop, by his own inward exertions. Such students have passed the point where their external environment can affect their growth favorably. They may learn from it, but the time has also come to resist it and turn to the internal adjustment to higher relations only.

The brevity of these letters should not mislead the reader. Every statement in them is a statement of law. They point to causes of which life is an effect; that life arising from the action of Spirit in Nature, and which we must understand as it is manifested within us before we can advance on the Path. There is a scientific meaning within all these devotional or ethical injunctions, for the Wisdom-Religion never relaxes her hold upon Science or attempts to dis sever an effect from its cause. Most of these admonitions have their base in the constitution of the Archæus, or World-Soul, and the correlation of its energies; others, still, adhere in the Eternal.

No less should the reader guard himself against a slight estimate arising from the exquisite modesty of Z. An occultist is never so truly a man of power as when he has wholly learned and exhibits this truth:

“And the power the disciple shall desire is that which shall make him appear as nothing *in the eyes of men.*”

The inner eye, *the power of seeing*, looks deeper into the source of a man's knowledge and takes it at its true value. Those men who are sharers in the Divine, whose first office is to give, are often protected from the demands and curiosity of the careless by a simple exterior which deceives the worldly sense. Some men are great because of the Power which stands behind them, the divine energies which flow

through them; they are great through having learned how to receive this celestial influx from higher spheres of Being; they are the appointed ministrants, the true servitors of the Law and pupils of Masters whose office is humanitarian and universal.

Such aid is never volunteered; it follows the Karmic behest, and, when given, leaves the student free to follow it or not, as his intuitions may direct. There is not a shadow or vestige of *authority* in the matter, as the world understands the word *authority*. Those who travel the unknown way send messages back, and he who can receives them. Only a few of the first steps are here recorded and the first impediments surmounted. No hints of magic lore are to be found; no formulas of creed or occult powers; the questions of an awakening soul are answered, and the pilgrim is shown where lies the entrance to the Path. The world at large seeks the facts of occult science, but the student who has resolved to attain desires to find the true road. What may seem to others as mere ethics is to him practical instruction, for as he follows it he soon perceives its relation to facts and laws which he is enabled to verify, and what seemed to him the language of devotion merely, is found to be that of science; but the science is spiritual, for the Great Cause is pure Spirit.

Many students must at some time stand where the writer then stood, at the beginning of the way. For all these this correspondence is made public, and they are urged to look within the printed words for their imperishable meaning. They may be cheered to find the footprints of a comrade upon the rugged Path, above which the light of Truth ever shines. Yet even this light is not always a clear splendor. It may seem "in the daytime a cloud, and by night a pillar of fire." We must question every external aspect, even that of Faith itself, for the secret and germ of things lies at their core. Let us purify even

our Faith; let us seek Truth herself, and not our preconceptions of Truth. In her mirror we shall never see our own familar face: that which we see is still ourselves, because our real self is truth.

As the Theosophical movement gathers new momentum, fresh recruits may be aided by those letters which so greatly sustained me, or encouraged by some co-partnership of thought, and that, too, in the real issue confronting them. We first take this issue to be the acquirement of occult knowledge. Soon we find that the meaning of all really informed occult writers eludes us. We find that books only serve to remind us of what we knew in the long past, perhaps when "journeying with Deity", and the echoes awakened within us are so faint that they are rarely to be caught. Whether we study philosophies, metaphysics, physics, ethics, harmony, astrology, natural sciences, astralism, magnetism, or what not, we meet with endless contradiction and differentiation; we forever require to strike the balance of our own intuition. We discover that the final word has not yet been *written down* upon any of the higher subjects (unless it be on mathematics, and scarcely on that), and that all our learning is but a finger-post to that supreme knowledge of Truth which is only found and closely guarded within the human heart. Thrown back upon our inner perceptions for continual readjustment, on every side of experience this warning confronts us: *Stand ready to abandon all thou hast learned!* Not knowing the one center, we cannot thoroughly know any sub-center. The cause unknown, effects mislead us. Then we turn to that mysterious center whereby the One is manifest in man, and we begin the study of the heart, both in itself and in the life it has instituted about us.

To be put into more direct communication with the world of cause is now the student's most pressing need. One thing alone prevents this,—himself. He

is of such gross fibre that he cannot be "porous to thought, bibulous of the sea of light". To the refinement and dispersal of this lower self—of the man he now takes himself to be—he then directs his will. Each man has a different mode of doing this, but each who advances at all finds that with every new period of his inner life a new self rises before him. Looking back over a group of weeks or months, he is amazed to see what manner of man he was then, and smiles that pitying smile which we bestow upon the faded letters of our youth.

Yet some there be who ossify there in their rut; let them struggle mightily to break up the mass which has resisted all environment, all change, all the conditions of progressive life. They have done for themselves what the enemy strives to do for others; they are the rock in their own path.

What our Eastern brothers call "the sheaths of the heart" fall away one by one; when the last bursts open there is a silence, the silence of the mystic death. But "the dead shall arise", and from that death springs up the first tender growth of eternal life.

Up to this point we shall not travel in the ensuing pages. Yet having realized the real issue so forcibly that his whole strength was at the start directed towards self-knowledge and the right use of Thought, the writer offers a part of his first instructions to those of his comrades who, single-hearted and of royal Faith, hold Truth to be dearer than all material life and seek it on the hidden way. There is no tie in the universe equal to that which binds such comrades together. It has been forged in the fires of unspeakable anguish; it has been rivetted by a dauntless purpose and a unique, because Divine, Love. The fierce hatred of seen and unseen worlds cannot tamper with it so long as a man remains true to himself, for this larger life is himself, and as he grows towards it his

self-imposed fetters fall away and he stands, at last, a free soul, in the celestial Light which is Freedom itself, obedient only to the Law of its own divine Being. To reach it, let us obey the law of our own Being, for, truly, *Being is One*.

My comrades, wherever you are, I salute you

JASPER NIEMAND, F. T. S.

LETTERS THAT HAVE HELPED ME.

I.

MY DEAR JASPER:



NOW let me elevate a signal. Do not think much of me, please. Think kindly of me; but oh, my friend, direct your thoughts to the Eternal Truth. I am, like you, struggling on the road. Perhaps a veil might in an instant fall down from your spirit, and you would be long ahead of us all. The reason you have had help is that in other lives you gave it to others. In every effort you made to lighten another mind and open it to Truth, you were helped yourself. Those pearls you found for another and gave to him, you really retained for yourself in the act of benevolence. For when one lives thus to help others, he is thereby putting in practice the rule to try and "kill out all sense of separateness", and thus gets little by little in possession of the true light.

Never lose, then, that attitude of mind. Hold fast in silence to all that is your own, for you will need it in the fight; but never, *never* desire to get knowledge or power for any other purpose than to give it on the altar, for thus alone can it be saved to you.

So many are there around me who are ardent desirers and seekers, devotees; but they are doing it because the possession seems valuable. Perhaps I see in you—I hope I mistake not—a pure desire to seek Knowledge for its own sake, and that all others may be benefitted. So I would point out to you the only royal road, the one vehicle. Do all those acts, physical, mental, moral, for the reason that they

must be done, instantly resigning all interest in them, offering them up upon the altar. What altar? Why, the great spiritual altar, which is, if one desires it, in the heart. Yet still use earthly discrimination, prudence, and wisdom.

It is not that you must rush madly or boldly out *to do, to do*. Do what you find to do. Desire ardently to do it, and even when you shall not have succeeded in carrying anything out but some small duties, some words of warning, your strong desire will strike like Vulcan upon other hearts in the world, and suddenly you will find that done which you had longed to be the doer of. Then rejoice that another had been so fortunate as to make such a meritorious Karma. Thus, like the rivers running into the unswelling, passive ocean, will your desires enter into your heart.

I find all your remarks just; and besides, there seems to be a real spirit behind them. Do not fear nor fail because you feel dark and heavy. The very rage you feel will break the shrine that covers the mystery after a while. No one can really help you. No one can open your doors. You locked them up, and only you can open them. When you open any door, beyond it you find others standing there who had passed you long ago, but now, unable to proceed, they are there waiting; others are there waiting for you. Then you come, and, opening a door, those waiting disciples perhaps may pass on; thus on and on. What a privilege this, to reflect that we may perhaps be able to help those who seemed greater than ourselves!

O, what a groan Nature gives to see the heavy Karma which man has piled upon himself and all the creatures of the three worlds! That deep sigh pierces through my heart. How can the load be lifted? Am I to stand for myself, while the few strong hands of Blessed Masters and Their friends

hold back the awful cloud? Such a vow I registered ages ago to help them, and I must. Would to great Karma I could do more! And you! do what you can.

Place your only faith, reliance, and trust on Karma.

Z.

II.

MY DEAR BROTHER:



OUR last long letter came duly to hand and has been read with much pleasure. It is quite rare to find one willing to enter this movement on the basis you have laid down for yourself, and my previous letter was written in order to see what your attitude really was, and also because I then felt from your writing that you were really in earnest. And before yours of to-day, I fell to thinking about you and wondering whether a future of power, a brilliancy of knowledge, was not your aspiration, and what effect certain occurrences would have upon that.

Judge, then, my pleasure in reading your words exactly answering my mental inquiries of yesterday and placing you in the right position.

It is true, we must aspire ardently, and blessed is the one who, after the first aspiration, is wise enough to see the Truth.

Three qualities forever encompass us: *Satwa* (truth and stability), *Rajas* (action, war, aspiration, ambition), *Tamas* (indifference, ignorance, darkness).

None may be ignored. So the path lies from Tamas, up through war, ambition, and aspiration, to Satwa, or truth and stability. We are now in *Rajasika* regions, sometimes lifting our fingers up to the hem of the garment of Satwa, ever aspiring, ever trying to purify our thoughts and free ourselves from

the attachment to action and objects. So, of course, the ardent student naturally aspires for power. This is wise. But he must soon begin to see what he must do for real progress. For continual aspiration for power merely is sure to sow for us the giant weed of self, which is the giant spoken of in *Light on the Path*.

As to the Theosophical Society, all should be admitted, for we can refuse *no one*. If this is a Universal Brotherhood, we can make no distinctions; but we can put ourselves right in the beginning by seeing that people do not enter with mistaken notions of what we have. And yet with all our precautions, how often we find persons who are not really sincere themselves judging us by their standard, unbelieving in our sincerity. They enter; they find that each must study for himself and that no guides are told off to each one; then they are disgusted. They forget that "the kingdom of heaven must be taken by violence." We have also had to suffer from our friends. People who have joined us in secret like Nicodemus; they have stood idly by, waiting for the Cause to get strong or to get fashionable, and leaving all the hard fighting to be done by a few earnest men who defied the hosts of Materialism and of Conventionality. Had they spoken for their Cause, more earnest people would long ago have heard of the movement, instead of being kept away until now, like yourself, for want of knowledge that it existed.

You will find that other members care for nothing but Theosophy, and are yet forced by circumstances to work in other fields as well. What moments they have left are devoted to the Cause, and in consequence they have no unoccupied hours; each moment, day and evening, is filled up, and therefore they are happy. Yet they are unhappy that they cannot give their entire working time to the Cause in which some have been from the beginning. They feel, like Claude St. Martin, a burning desire within them to

get these truths to the ears of all men. They are truths, and you are in the right path. In America it is as easy to find the Light of Lights as in India, but all around you are those who do not know these things, who never heard of them, and yet many of our fellow members are only anxious to study for their own benefit. Sometimes, if it were not for my reliance on those Great Beings who beckon me ever on, I would faint, and, leaving these people to themselves, rush off into the forest. So many people like Theosophy, and yet they at once wish to make it select and of high tone. It is for all men. It is for the common people, who are ever with us. Others, again, come in and wait like young birds for food to be put into them: they *will not think*, and ages must pass before they will progress.


You misunderstood a little the words "Do not think much of me". Underline "*much*", but not "think". You will please think all the thoughts you will of me, but do not place me on any pinnacle: that's all I meant.

A constant endeavor towards perfecting the mere mortal machine is folly. Thereby we sometimes fail to live up to our own intuitions. This habit goes on for some time, but will get weaker as other senses (inner ones) begin to appear. Yet know the new fully before being off with the old.

Inasmuch as we learn almost solely from each other—as we are all here for each other—the question of the effect of affinities upon our acts and thoughts is enormous and wide. It anon saves us, and anon damns. For we may meet in our lives a person who has a remarkable effect, either for good or ill, because of the affinities engendered in past lives. And now our eyes are open, we act to-day for the future.

That you may pass beyond the sea of darkness, I offer you my life and help. Z.

III.

AY, Brother Jasper, are you tired? I am. Not tired of fate or of the great "Leaders of the World", but with all these people who gape and gape and are (excuse me) so Americanly "independent," as if men were ever independent of each other.

You ask about the "moment of choice". It is made up of all moments. It is not in space or time, but is the aggregation of those moments flying by us each instant. It is referred to in *Esoteric Buddhism* as a period not yet arrived for the race, when it will as a whole be compelled to make choice for good or evil. But any single individual can bring on the period for himself. When it will or has come, the uninstructed cannot tell. For the student of occultism it may come in the next instant, or it may come one hundred lives after. But it cannot come this instant unless all the previous lives have led up to it. Yet as regards the student, even if it be presented to him and he refuse, he will be brought to the choice in future existences, with the whole body of his race. Race influences are insidious and powerful. For instance, my race has its peculiarities deeply seated and inherited from an extraordinary past. I must be under their influence in this body as a necessary part of my experience. In another life I might have been a prosaic Hottentot, or an Englishman, and in a succeeding one I might be under the influence of other race peculiarities. Those influences are, then, guiding me every moment, and each thought I have adds to them now, for either my own future use or for some other person who will come under the power of part of the force generated now by me.

As to the sub-conscious mind. It is difficult to

explain. I find constantly that I have ideas that internally I thoroughly understand, and yet can find no language for them. Call it sub-conscious if you like. It is there and can be affected; indeed, it is affected every moment. It is a nearness to the universal mind. So if I desire to influence—say your mind—I do not formulate your sub-conscious plane, but firmly and kindly think of you and think of the subject I wish you to think of. This must reach you. If I am selfish, then it has more difficulty to get there; but if it be brotherly, then it gets there more easily, being in harmony with the universal mind and the Law. The Psychical Society speaks of it, and says that the influence “emerges into the lower mind” by one or more of the channels. But they do not know what those “channels” are, or even if they do exist. In fact, the whole subject of mind is only faintly understood in the West. They say “mind”, meaning the vast range and departments of that which they call mind, whereas there must be a need for the names of those departments. When the true ideas are grasped, the names will follow. Meanwhile we must be satisfied with “mind” as including the whole thing. But it does not. Certainly it is not ordinary mental motion—ratiocination—to grasp in an instant a whole subject, premises and conclusions, without stopping to reason. It cannot be called a *picture*, for with some it comes as an idea, and not as a picture. Memory. What is that? Is it brain-impression; or similarity of vibration, recognized upon being repeated and then producing a picture? If so, then the power to recognize the vibration as the same as before is separate from the matter which vibrates. And if the power inhere in the brain cells, how is it possible, when we know they are constantly being changed? Yet memory is perfect, no matter what happens. That it is above brain is clear, because a man may be killed by having his

brain blown to atoms, and yet his "shell" can give all the incidents of his life, and they are not taken from the brain, for that is dead. Where, then, is the sub-conscious mind? And where are the channels, and how are they connected? I think through the heart, and that the heart is the key to it all, and that the brain is only the servant of the heart,* for remember that there is in it the "small dwarf who sits at the centre." Think it out on that line now for yourself—or any other line that you may choose, but *think*. As ever, Z.

IV.

DEAR SIR AND BROTHER:

IN cogitating lately I thought of you in respect to some of my own thoughts. I was reading a book and looking around within myself to see how I could enlarge my idea of brotherhood. Practice in benevolence will not give it its full growth. I had to find some means of reaching further, and struck on this, which is as old as old age.

I am not separate from anything. "I am that which is." That is, I am Brahma, and Brahma is everything. But being in an illusionary world, I am surrounded by certain appearances that seem to make me separate. So I will proceed to mentally state and accept that I am all these illusions. I am my friends,—and then I went to them in general and in particular. I am my enemies; then I felt them all. I am the poor and the wicked; I am the ignorant. Those moments of intellectual gloom are the moments when I am influenced by those ignorant ones who are myself. All this in my nation. But there are many

* Not the physical heart, but the real centre of life in man.—
J. N.

nations, and to those I go in mind; I feel and I am them all, with what they hold of superstition or of wisdom or evil. All, all is myself. Unwisely, I was then about to stop, but the whole is Brahma, so I went to the Devas and Asuras;* the elemental world, that too is myself. After pursuing this course awhile I found it easier to return to a contemplation of all men as myself. It is a good method and ought to be pursued, for it is a step toward getting into contemplation of the All. I tried last night to reach up to Brahma, but darkness is about his pavilion.

Now what does all this insanity sound like? I'll tell you what: if it were not for this insanity I would go insane. But shall I not take heart, even when a dear friend deserts me and stabs me deep, when I know that he is myself?

NAMASTAE!

Z.

I found the above letter still more valuable when I remembered that Brahma is "the universal expansive force of Nature"—from *Brih*, to expand; and so stated in an article by H. P. Blavatsky in *Five Years of Theosophy*. In the *Dhammapada* we are told to think ourselves to be the sun and stars, the wet and dry, heat and cold; in short, to feel all experience, for we can live all out in the mind.

J. N.

V.

DEAR JASPER:



WISH I could answer your letter as you ought to have it done. But I feel my inability. However, our duty is to never consider our ability, but to do what comes to be done in whatever way we can, no matter how inade-

* Gods and demons.—J. N.

quate the work appears to others. When we stop to consider our weakness, we think, by comparison, of how another would do it. Our *only right is in the act itself*. The consequences are in the great Brahm. So I will just say what comes.

I feel the sadness in your letter, but know that you will rebound from that. Do not let the sadness of knowledge create despair; that sadness is less than the joy of Truth. Abstract Truth, even, has necessarily in it all the mercy there is in the whole. Its sternness is only a reflection from our own imperfections, which make us recognize the stern aspect alone. We are not the only ones to suffer upon the Path. Like ourselves, Masters have wept, though They do not now weep. One of them wrote some years ago: "Do you suppose we have not passed through many times worse trials than you now think you are in?" The Master often seems to reject and to hide his (spiritual) face, in order that the disciple may try. On the doors and walls of the temple the word "TRY" is written. ("The Brothers" is a better designation than Mahâtmas or Masters.)

Along the path of the true student is sadness, but also there is great joy and hope. Sadness comes from a more just appreciation of the difficulties in one's way, and of the great wickedness of the individual and collective heart of man. But look at the great fountain of hope and of joy in the consideration that the Brothers exist, that They were men too; They had to fight the fight; They triumphed, and They work for those left after Them. Then beyond Them are "the Fathers", that is, the spirits of "just men made perfect", those Who lived and worked for humanity ages ago and Who are now out of our sphere, but Who nevertheless still influence us in that Their spiritual forces flow down upon this earth for all pure souls. Their immediate influence is felt by Masters, and by us through the latter.

Now, as you say, it is all Faith; but what is Faith? It is the intuitional feeling—"that is true". So formulate to yourself certain things as true that you feel to be true, and then increase your faith in them.


Don't be anxious. Don't get "maddened". Because in the fact that you are "maddened" (of course in the metaphorical sense) is found the proof that you are anxious. In a worldly sense it is perhaps well to be anxious about a highly important matter, but in occultism it is different, for the Law takes no account of our projects and objects, or our desire to be ahead or behind. So, if we are anxious, we raise a barrier against progress, by perturbation and straining harshly. You wrote to B. that what is his, is his. Then the converse is true; what is not, is not. Why don't you take your own medicine?

Yours,

Z.

VI.

DEAR JASPER:

T is a great advance that you hear the bells, which few hear, and evidence that you are where you can hear them; that is a great deal indeed. Do not look for the voice of the bells, but regard the *ideas* which thereupon come into the head, and apply to them the touchstone of your own Soul, just as you advised B. The fact that you feel "dead" is something you should not worry about. It is likely that you are under the operation of a law which prevails in nature, that you will find referred to in an article in *Path Magazine* for April, '86, page 14. It is that the soul goes to a new place or new surroundings and becomes silent there awhile—what you call "dead"—and draws strength there, begins to get accustomed to its new surroundings,

after which it begins to move about. This is seen in ordinary life in the bashfulness of a boy. That is, the bashfulness is the shyness felt in new surroundings, and is just what happens when the soul goes to a new place or into new surroundings. There can be no loss or detriment to our efforts. Every aspiration higher brightens up the road connecting the higher and lower self. No doubt of that. It is not *what* is done, but the spirit in which the least thing is done that is counted. Hear the word of the Master.

"He who does the best he knows how and that he can do, does enough for us."

The mere fact that a man appreciates these truths and feels these aspirations is proof that he is on the right road. It is well to tread it *now*. We will not always live. Death must come. How much better, then, to embrace death while thus at work than to swerve off only to be brought up with suddenness in after lives. Immediate rebirth is for those who are always working with their hearts on Master's work and free from self interest.

The one Spirit is in all, is the property of each, therefore It is always there, always with us, and, by reflecting on that, little room is left for sorrow or delusion. If we believe that the soul of all is measured by the whole of Time and not by a part, then we care not for these moments which relate alone to our body. If we live in our hearts we soon prove that space and time exist not. Nothing foreign to Master enters there; our faults are not there. The heart reaches Him always, and no doubt He replies. He does I know. He helps us while He leaves us to ourselves. He needs not to stoop to see our devotion, for that is of a supernal quality and reaches anywhere.

No, I do not say nor have I said that you ought to do something other than you do. We each do what we can. None of us can be the judge of any creature

existing; so I do not judge you in the least respect. Your life may in the great sum total be greater than any life I ever led or that any one has led. Whether you are in America, Europe, or India makes no difference. This is seeking conditions. I have come to understand that Masters themselves must have worked themselves up out of much worse conditions than we are in. No matter where we are, the same spirit pervades all and is accessible. What need, then, to change places? We do not change ourselves by moving the body to another *locus*. We only put it under a different influence. And in order to change we must have got to dislike the place we moved from. That is *attachment by opposites*, and that will produce detriment, as does all that disturbs the equilibrium of the soul. You know the same result is produced by two exact opposites, and thus extremes meet.

That hot flame you speak of is one of the experiences, as are also the sounds. There are so many, many of these things. Often they result from extreme tension or vibration in the aura of an aspirant of pure devotion. They are himself, and he should be on his guard against taking them for wonders. Often they are "apparitions in Brahm". They are like new lights and sights to a mariner on an unfamiliar coast. They will go on, or alter, or stop. You are only to carefully note them, and "do not exhibit wonder nor form association."

I cannot say more. All help you extend to any other soul is help to yourself. It is our duty to help all, and we must begin on those nearest to us, for to run abroad to souls we might possibly help we again forsake our present duty. It is better to die in our own duty, however mean, than to try another one. So lift your head and look around upon the hulks of past imagined faults. They were means and teachers. Cast all doubt, all fear, all regret aside, and freely take of truth what you may contain

right on every step. It will thus be well. Eternal Truth is one and indivisible, and we may get from the Fathers (Pitris) flashes now and then of what is true.

Words are things. With me and in fact. Upon the lower plane of social intercourse they are things, but soulless and dead because that convention in which they have their birth has made abortions of them. But when we step away from that conventionality they become alive in proportion to the reality of the thought—and its purity—that is behind them. So in communication between two students they are things, and those students must be careful that the ground of intercourse is fully understood. Let us use with care those living messengers called words.

Where I see you mistaken I will speak, to warn my Brother who temporarily knows not. For did I not call on the bugle, perhaps other things might switch him off to where perhaps for the time he would be pleased, but would again be sorry, and then when his mistake was plain he would justly sigh to me across dark centuries of separation that I had been false to my duty of warning. As ever, Z.

The new plane to which the soul may go, referred to in this letter, is the astral plane. It is the plane next above the material one, and consists of a subtile order of matter. When a student turns his attention to the higher life and desires intensely to find the way, his soul has begun to awaken and to speak. It has heard the voice of the spirit. Then the inner senses begin to unfold, at first ever so gently, so tenderly, we scarce hear their report. But the soul has then turned its attention to the astral plane, that being the next one to be learned on the way upward; its energy is transferred from the material plane to this one, and we have an influx of many confused

dreams and strange experiences, awake and asleep. These may or may not continue; all depends upon the individual soul and upon Karma. It is a most confusing plane, and, generally speaking, we may say that those students are more fortunate who make a marked degree of progress in spiritual things without having any conscious experience of the astral plane. For then they can later on learn it *from above*, instead of from below, and with far less danger to themselves. The whole must be known, but we may progress in various ways, even by discontinuous degrees, only then we must go back later on, to what we passed by. Such a going back does not imply detriment or loss of degree, for such cannot be lost when once gained in reality.

With regard to the astral plane being a more subtile order of matter, this truth is often denied by clairvoyants and untrained seers. They do not distinguish between the psychic senses and the spiritual. They can see through gross matter, such as a wall, the human body, and so forth, as if it were glass, but they cannot see through astral substance, and hence they believe its forms and all the pictures and shapes in the astral light to be real. Only the adept sees through these illusions, which are far more powerful because composed of a subtile order of matter: subtile energies, fine forces have a highly increased rate of power over grosser ones. The adept has at his command the rate of vibration which dispels them or drives them asunder. In speaking of the astral plane, I mean the lower soul plane, and not that higher and purified quality which the author of *Light on the Path* calls the "divine astral".

By anxiety we exert the constrictive power of egoism, which densifies and perturbs our magnetic sphere, rendering us less permeable to the efflux from above.

J. N.

VII.

DEAR JASPER:



HAVE your letter, Comrade, in which you say how much you wish there were some Adepts sent to the United States to help all true students. Yet you know well They do not need to come here in person, in order to help. By going carefully over your letter there appears to be the possibility of the seed of doubt in your heart as to the wise ordering of all things, for all are under the Law, and Masters first of all. Mind, I only say the "*possibility of the seed of doubt*". For I judge from my own experience. Well do I remember when I thought as you say, how much better 'twould be if some one were there.

If that is allowed to remain it will metamorphose itself into a seed and afterward a plant of doubt. Cast it right out! It does not now show as seed of doubt, but it will be a case of metamorphosis, and the change would be so great as to deceive you into thinking it were never from the same root. The best stand to take is that it is all right as it is now, and when the time comes for it to be better it will be so. Meanwhile we have a duty to see that we do all we can *in our own place* as we see best, undisturbed and undismayed by aught.

How much I have in years gone away said and thought those very words of yours and to no profit! Why do you care what becomes of a million human beings? Are not millions going to death daily with no one to tell them of all this? But did you suppose that all this was not provided for? "And heavenly death itself is also well provided for." Now, then, you and I must learn to look on the deaths or the famishing of millions of beings with unfaltering heart. Else

we had better give it all up now. Consider that at this moment are so many persons in various far distant places who cannot ever hear these truths. Do you grieve for them? Do you realize their state? No; you realize only partially the same thing among those with whom it was your present lot to be born—I mean the nation. Do you want to do more than your best? Do you covet the work of another? No; you do not. You will sit calmly where you are, then, and, with an unaffected heart, picture to yourself the moral and physical deaths and famines which are now without the possibility of prevention or amelioration. Your faith will know that *all* is provided for.

I do not say that you must attain to that calm *now* or give up seeking the Way; but I do say that you must admit that such an attainment must be absolutely tried for. For of such is the trial, and why should we care? *We must some day be able to stand any shock*, and to get ready for that time we must be now triumphant over some smaller things. Among others is the very position you and I are now in; that is, standing our ground and feeling ourselves so much and so awfully alone. But we know that They have left us a commandment. That we keep, although now and then objects, senses, men, and time conspire to show us that Masters laugh at us. It is all a delusion. It is only one consequence of our past Karma now burning itself out before our eyes. The whole phantasmagoria is only a picture thrown up against the Screen of Time by the mighty magic of Prakriti (Nature). But you and I are superior to Nature. Why, then, mind these pictures? Part of that very screen, however, being our own mortal bodies, we can't help the *sensation* derived therefrom through our connection with the body. It is only another form of cold or heat; and what are they? They are vibrations; they are *felt*; they do not really exist in themselves. So we can calmly look on the picture as it passes frag-

mentarily through those few square feet contained within the superficial boundaries of our elementary frame. We *must* do so, for it is a copy of the greater, of the universal form. For we otherwise will never be able to understand the greater picture. Now, then, is there not many a cubic inch of your own body which is entitled to know and to be the Truth in greater measure than now? And yet you grieve for the ignorance of so many other human beings! Grieve on; and I grieve too. Do not imagine that I *am* what is there written. Not so. I am grieving just the same outwardly, but inwardly trying what I have just told you. And what a dream all this is. Here I am writing you so seriously, and now I see that you know it all quite well and much better than I do.

Yet, my dear Jasper, now and then I feel—not Doubt of Masters who hear any heartbeat in the right direction, but—a terrible Despair of these people. Oh, my God! The age is black as hell, hard as iron. It is iron, it is Kali Yuga. Kali is always painted black. Yet Kali Yuga by its very nature, and terrible, swift momentum, permits one to do more with his energies in a shorter time than in any other Yuga. But heavens, what a combat! Demons from all the spheres; waving clouds of smoky Karma; dreadful shapes; stupefying exhalations from every side. Exposed at each turn to new dangers. Imagine a friend walking with you who you see is in the same road, but all at once he is permeated by these things of death and shows a disposition to obstruct your path, the path of himself. Yes; the gods are asleep for awhile. But noble hearts still walk here, fighting over again the ancient fight. They seek each other, so as to be of mutual help. We will not fail them. To fail would be nothing, but to stop working for Humanity and Brotherhood would be awful. We cannot: we will not. Yet we have not a clear road. No, it is not clear. I am content if I can see the next

step in advance only. You seek *The Warrior*. He is here, somewhere. No one can find him for you. You must do that. Still He fights on. No doubt He sees you and tries to make you see Him. Still He fights on and on.

How plainly the lines are drawn, how easily the bands are seen. Some want a certificate, or an uttered pledge, or a secret meeting, or a declaration, but without any of that I see those who—up to this hour—I find are my “companions”. They need no such folly. They are there; they hear and understand the battle-cry, they recognize the sign. Now where are the rest? Many have I halted, and spoken the exact words to them, have exposed to them my real heart, and they heard nothing; they thought that heart was something else. I sigh to think how many. Perhaps I overlooked some; perhaps some did not belong to me. There are some who partly understood the words and the sign, but they are not sure of themselves; they know that they partake of the nature, but are still held back.

Do you not see, Jasper, that your place in the ranks is well known? You need no assurances because they are *within* you. Now what a dreadful letter; but it is all true.

A student of occultism after a while gets into what we may call a psychic whirl, or a vortex of occultism. At first he is affected by the feelings and influences of those about him. That begins to be pushed off and he passes into the whirl caused by the mighty effort of his Higher Self to make him remember his past lives. Then those past lives affect him. They become like clouds throwing shadows on his path. Now they seem tangible and then fade away, only a cloud. Then they begin to affect his impulse to action in many various ways. To-day he has vague calling longings to do something, and, critically regarding himself, he cannot see in this life any cause. It is

the bugle note of a past life blown almost in his face. It startles him; it may throw him down. Then it starts before him, a phantom, or, like a person behind you as you look at a mirror, it looks over his shoulder. Although dead and past they yet have a power. He gets too a power and a choice. If all his previous past lives were full of good, then irresistible is the force for his benefit. But all alike marshal up in front, and he hastens their coming by his effort. Into this vortex about him others are drawn, and their germs for good or ill ripen with activity. This is a phase of the operation of Karmic stamina. The choice is this. These events arrive one after the other and, as it were, offer themselves. If he chooses wrong, then hard is the fight. The one chosen attracts old ones like itself perhaps, for all have a life of their own. Do you wonder that sometimes in the case of those who rush unprepared into the "circle of ascetics" and before the ripe moment, insanity sometimes results? But then that insanity is their safety for the next life, or for their return to sanity.

Receive my brotherly assurances, my constant desire to help you.

Z.

In respect to Karmic action it is well to recall the statement of Patanjali that "works exist only in the shape of mental deposits". (Book 2, Aph. 12, A.) By "works" is here meant Karma, the stock of works, or Action. Its results remain as mental deposits or potential energies in the higher part of the fifth principle, and when it reincarnates those seeds are there to "ripen on the tablets of the mind" whenever they are exposed to favoring circumstances. Sometimes they remain dormant for want of something to arouse them, as in the case of children. "The mental deposits of works, collected from time without beginning in the ground of the mind, as they by degrees arrive at maturation, so do they, existing

in lesser or greater measure (the sum of merit being less than that of demerit, or conversely) lead to their effects in the shape of rank, raised or lowered, . . . or experience of good or ill." (Book 2, Aph. 13, B.) The mind energizes and impels us to fresh action. The impulse lies within, in germ, and may be ripened by interior or exterior suggestion. Can we, then, be too careful to guard the ground of the mind, to keep close watch over our thoughts? These thoughts are dynamic. Each one as it leaves the mind has a *vis viva* of its own, proportionate to the intensity with which it was propelled. As the force or work done, of a moving body, is proportionate to the square of its velocity, so we may say that the force of thoughts is to be measured by the square or quadrupled power of their spirituality, so greatly do these finer forces increase by activity. The spiritual force, being impersonal, fluidic, not bound to any constricting center, acts with unimaginable swiftness. A thought, on its departure from the mind, is said to associate itself with an elemental; it is attracted wherever there is a similar vibration, or, let us say, a suitable soil, just as the winged thistle-seed floats off and sows itself in this spot and not in that, in the soil of its natural selection. Thus the man of virtue, by admitting a material or sensual thought into his mind, even though he expel it, sends it forth to swell the evil impulses of the man of vice from whom he imagines himself separated by a wide gulf, and to whom he may have just given a fresh impulse to sin. Many men are like sponges, porous and bibulous, ready to suck up every element of the order preferred by their nature. We all have more or less of this quality: we attract what we love, and we may derive a greater strength from the vitality of thoughts infused from without than from those self-reproduced within us at a time when our nervous vitality is exhausted. It is a solemn thought, this, of our responsibility for the

impulse of another. We live in one another, and our widely different deeds have often a common source. The occultist cannot go far upon his way without realizing to what a great extent he is "his brother's keeper". Our affinities are ourselves, in whatever ground they may live and ripen. J. N.

VIII.

DEAR JASPER:



SEIZE a few moments to acknowledge your letter. This is a period of waiting, of silence. Nothing seems alive. All oracles are silent. But the great clock of the Universe still goes on, unheeding. On Sunday I engaged in Meditation and received some benefit. I wished I could see you to speak of it. Yet these things are too high for words, and when we approach the subjects we are not able to give expression to our thoughts. We do not live up to our highest soul possibilities. All that prevents our reaching up to the high thoughts of the far past is our own weakness, and not the work of any other. How petty seem the cares of this earth when we indulge in deep reflection; they are then seen for what they are, and later on they are obliterated. It is true that the road to the gods is dark and difficult, and, as you say, we get nothing from them at first call: we have to call often. But we can on the way stop to look ahead, for no matter how sombre or howsoever weak ourselves, the Spectator sees it all and beckons to us, and whispers, "Be of good courage, for I have prepared a place for you where you will be with me forever". He is the Great Self; He is ourselves.

The Leaders of the world are always trying to aid us. May we pass the clouds and see them ever. All

our obstructions are of our own making. All our power is the storage of the past. That store we all must have; who in this life feels it near is he who has in this life directed his thoughts to the proper channel. That others do not feel it is because they have lived but blindly. That you do not feel it and see it more is because you have not yet directed all your mental energies to it. This great root of Karmic energy can be drawn upon by directing the fire of our minds in that direction. Towards Love of course is the right way; the Love of the Divine and of all beings. If we feel that after all we are not yet "Great Souls" who participate in the totality of those "Souls who wait upon the gods", it need not cast us down: we are waiting our hour in hope. Let us wait patiently, in the silence which follows all effort, knowing that thus Nature works, for in her periods of obscurity she does naught where that obscurity lies, while doubtless she and we too are then at work on other spheres.

That described by you is not the soul; it is only a partial experience. Did you know the Soul, then could you yourself reply to all those questions, for all knowledge is there. In the soul is every creature and every thought alike. That sinking down of your thoughts to the center is practice. It can be done and we cannot explain it; we can only say "do it". Still do not hunger to do these things. The first step in *becoming* is Resignation. Resignation is the sure, true, and royal road. Our subtle motives, ever changing, elude us when we seek it. You are near to it; it needs a great care. But while the body may be requiring time to feel its full results, we can instantly change the attitude of the mind. After Resignation, follow (in their own order) Satisfaction, Contentment, Knowledge. Anxiety to do these things is an obscurant and deterrent. So try to acquire patient Resignation. The lesson intended by the

Karma of your present life is *the higher patience*. I can tell you nothing on this head; it is a matter for self and practice. Throw away every wish to get the power, and seek only for understanding of thyself. Insist on carelessness. Assert to yourself that it is not of the slightest consequence what you were yesterday, but in every moment strive for that moment; the results will follow of themselves.

The Past! What is it? Nothing. Gone! Dismiss it. You are the past of yourself. Therefore it concerns you not as such. It only concerns you as you now are. In you, as now you exist, lies *all* the past. So follow the Hindu maxim: "Regret nothing; never be sorry; and cut all doubts with the sword of spiritual knowledge." Regret is productive only of error. I care not what I *was*, or what any one *was*. I only look for what I am each moment. For as each moment is and at once is not, it must follow that if we think of the past we forget the present, and while we forget, the moments fly by us, making more past. Then regret nothing, not even the greatest follies of your life, for they are gone, and you are to work in the present which is both past and future at once. So then, with that absolute knowledge that all your limitations are due to Karma, past or in this life, and with a firm reliance ever now upon Karma as the only judge, who will be good or bad as you make it yourself, you can stand anything that may happen and feel serene despite the occasional despondencies which all feel, but which the light of Truth always dispels. This verse always settles everything:—

"In him who knows that all spiritual beings are the same in kind with the Supreme Being, what room can there be for delusion and what room for sorrow when he reflects upon the unity of spirit?"

In all these inner experiences there are tides as well as in the ocean. We rise and fall. Anon the gods descend, and then they return to heaven. Do

not *think* of getting them to descend, but strive to raise *yourself* higher on the road down which they periodically return, and thus get nearer to them, so that you shall in fact receive their influences sooner than before.

Adios. May you ever feel the surge of the vast deeps that lie beyond the heart's small ebb. Perhaps our comrades are coming nearer. Who knows? But even if not, then we will wait; the sun must burst some day from the clouds. This will keep us strong while, in the company of the Dweller of the Threshold, we have perforce to stare and sham awhile.

Z.

The "higher patience" alluded to also requires a care. It is the fine line between pride and humility. Both are extremes and mistakes; oscillations from one to the other are only a trifle better. How shall we be proud when we are so small? How dare we be humble when we are so great? In both we blaspheme. But there is that firm spot between the two which is the place "neither too high nor too low" on which Krishna told Arjuna to sit; a spot *of his own*. It is the firm place which our faith has won from the world. On it we are always to stand calmly, not overshadowed by any man however great, because each of us contains the potentialities of every other. "Not overshadowed" does not mean that we are not to show reverence to those through whom the soul speaks. It is the great soul we reverence, and not the mortal clay. We are to examine thoughtfully all that comes to us from such persons, and all that comes to us from any source wearing the aspect of truth, and try faithfully to see wherein it may be true, laying it aside, if we fail, as fruit not ripe for us yet. We are not to yield up our intuitions to any being, while we may largely doubt our judgment at all times. We are not to act without the inner as-

severation, but we must not remain ignorant of the serious difficulty of separating this intuitive voice from the babble and prattle of fancy, desire, or pride. If we are just to ourselves we shall hold the balance evenly. How can we be just to any other who are not just to ourselves? In the Law a man suffers as much from injustice to himself as to another; it matters not in whose interests he has opposed the universal currents; the Law only knows that he has tried to deflect them by an injustice. It takes no account of persons nor even of ignorance of the Law. It is an impartial, impersonal force, only to be understood by the aid of the higher patience, which at once dares all and endures all.

"Never regret anything." Regret is a thought, hence an energy. If we turn its tide upon the past, it plays upon the seeds of that past and vivifies them; it causes them to sprout and grow in the ground of the mind: from thence to expression in action is but a step. A child once said to me when I used the word "Ghosts", "Hush! Don't think of them. What we think of always happens." There are no impartial observers like children when they think away from themselves.

J. N.

IX.

DEAR SIR AND BROTHER:



TELL your friend and inquirer this. No one was ever converted into Theosophy. Each one who *really* comes into it does so because it is only "an extension of previous beliefs". This will show you that Karma is a true thing. For no idea we get is any more than an extension of previous ones. That is, they are cause and effect in endless succession. Each one is the producer of the next and

inheres in that successor. Thus we are all different and some similar. My ideas of to-day and yours are tinged with those of youth, and we will thus forever proceed on the inevitable line we have marked out in the beginning. We of course alter a little always, but never until our old ideas are extended. Those *false* ideas now and then discarded are not to be counted; yet they give a shadow here and there. But through Brotherhood we receive the knowledge of others, which we consider until (if it fits us) it is ours. As far as your private conclusions are concerned, use your discrimination always. Do not adopt any conclusions merely because they are uttered by one in whom you have confidence, but adopt them when they coincide with your intuition. To be even unconsciously deluded by the influence of another is to have a counterfeit faith.

Spiritual knowledge includes every action. Inquirers ought to read the *Bhagavad-Gîtâ*. It will give them food for centuries if they read with spiritual eyes at all. Underneath its shell is the living spirit that will light us all. I read it ten times before I saw things that I did not see at first. In the night the ideas contained in it are digested and returned partly next day to the mind. It is the study of adepts.

Let no man be unaware that while there is a great joy in this belief there is also a great sorrow. Being true, being *the Law*, all the great forces are set in motion by the student. He now thinks he has given up ambition and comfort. The ambition and comfort he has given up are those of the lower plane, the mere reflections of the great ambitions and comforts of a larger life. The rays of truth burn up the covers time has placed upon those seeds, and then the seeds begin to sprout and cause new struggles. Do not leave any earnest inquirer in ignorance of this. It has cost others many years and tears of blood to self-learn it.

How difficult the path of action is! I see the future dimly, and unconsciously in such case one makes efforts either for or against it. Then Karma results. I could almost wish I did not hear these whispers. But he who conquers himself is greater than the conquerors of worlds.

Perhaps you see more clearly now how Karma operates. If one directs himself to eliminating all old Karma, the struggle very often becomes tremendous, for the whole load of ancient sin rushes to the front on a man and the events succeed each other rapidly; the strain is terrific, and the whole life fabric groans and rocks. As is said in the East, you may go through the appointed course in 700 births, in seven years, or in seven minutes.

The sentence in *Light on the Path* referred to by so many students is not so difficult as some others. One answer will do for all. The book is written on the basis of Reincarnation, and when it says the soiled garment will fall again on you, it means that this will happen in some other life, not necessarily in this, though that may be too. To "turn away in horror" is *not* detachment. Before we can hope to prevent any particular state of mind or events reaching us in this or in another life, *we* must in fact be detached from these things. Now *we* are not our bodies or mere minds, but the *real* part of us in which Karma inheres. Karma brings everything about. It attaches to our real inner selves by attachment and repulsion. That is, if we love vice or anything, it seizes on us by attachment thereto; if we hate anything, it seizes on our inner selves by reason of the strong horror we feel for it. In order to prevent a thing we must understand it; we cannot understand while we fear or hate it. We are not to love vice, but are to recognize that it is a part of the whole, and, trying to understand it, we thus get above it. This is the "doctrine of opposites" spoken of in

Bhagavad-Gîtâ. So if we turn in horror now (we may feel sad and charitable, though) from the bad, the future life will feel that horror and develop it by reaction into a reïncarnation in a body and place where we must in material life go through the very thing we hate now. As we are striving to reach God, we must learn to be as near like Him as possible. He loves and hates not; so we must strive to regard the greatest vice as being something we must not hate while we will not engage in it, and then we may approach that state where we will know the greater love that takes in good and evil men and things alike.

Good and Evil are only the two poles of the one thing. In the Absolute, Evil is the same thing in this way. One with absolute knowledge can *see* both Good and Evil, but he does not *feel* Evil to be a thing to flee from, and thus he has to call it merely the other pole. We say Good or Evil as certain events seem pleasant or unpleasant to us or our present civilization. And so we have coined those two words. They are bad words to use. For in the Absolute one is just as necessary as the other, and often what seem evil and "pain" are not absolutely so, but only necessary adjustments in the progress of the soul. Read *Bhagavad-Gîtâ* as to how the self seems to suffer pain. What is Evil now? Loss of friends? No; if you are self-centred. Slander? Not if you rely on Karma. There is only evil when you rebel against immutable decrees that must be worked out. You know that there must be these balancings which we call Good and Evil. Just imagine one man who really was a high soul, now living as a miser and enjoying it. You call it an evil; he a good. Who is right? You say "Evil" because you are speaking out of the True; but the True did know that he could never have passed some one certain point unless he had that experience, and so we see him now in an evil

state. Experience we must have, and if we accept it at our own hands we are wise. That is, while striving to do our whole duty to the world and ourselves, we will not live the past over again by vain and hurtful regrets, nor condemn any man, whatever his deeds, since we cannot know their true cause. We are not Karma, we are not the Law, and it is a species of that hypocrisy so deeply condemned by It for us to condemn any man. That the Law lets a man live is proof that he is not yet judged by that higher power. Still we must and will keep our discriminating power at all times.

As to rising above Good and Evil, that does not mean to do evil, of course. But, in fact, there can be no *real* Evil or Good; if our aim is right our acts cannot be evil. Now all acts are dead when done; it is in the heart that they are conceived and are already there done; the mere bodily carrying out of them is a dead thing in itself. So we may do a supposed good act and that shall outwardly appear good, and yet as our motive perhaps is wrong the act is naught, but the motive counts.

The great God did all, good and bad alike. Among the rest are what appear Evil things, yet he must be unaffected. So if we follow *Bhagavad-Gîtâ*, second chapter, we must do only those acts we believe right for the sake of God and not for ourselves, and if we are regardless of the consequences we are not concerned if they *appear* to be Good or Evil. As the heart and mind are the real planes of error, it follows that we must look to it that we do all acts merely because they are there to be done. It then becomes difficult only to separate ourselves from the act.

We can never as human beings rise above being the instruments through which that which is called Good and Evil comes to pass, but as that Good and Evil are the result of comparison and are not in themselves absolute, it must follow that we (the real

"*we*") must learn to rise internally to a place where these occurrences appear to us merely as changes in a life of change. Even in the worldly man this sometimes happens.

As, say Bismarck, used to moving large bodies of men and perhaps for a good end, can easily rise above the transient Evil, looking to a greater result. Or the physician is able to rise above pain to a patient, and only consider the good, or rather the result, that is to follow from a painful operation. The patient himself does the same.

So the student comes to see that he is not to do either "Good" or "Evil," but to do any certain number of acts set before him, and meanwhile not ever to regard much his line of conduct, but rather his line of motive, for his conduct follows necessarily from his motive. Take the soldier. For him there is nothing better than lawful war. Query. Does he do wrong in warring or not, even if war unlawful? He does not unless he mixes his motive. They who go into war for gain or revenge do wrong, but not he who goes at his superior's order, because it is his present duty.

Let us, then, extend help to all who come our way. This will be true progress; the veils that come over our souls fall away when we work for others. Let that be the real motive, and the *quality* of work done makes no difference. Z.

It would seem that Good and Evil are not inherent in things themselves, but in the uses to which those things are put by us. They are conditions of manifestation. Many things commonly called immoral are consequences of the unjust laws of man, of egoistic social institutions: such things are not immoral *per se*, but relatively so. They are only immoral in point of time. There are others whose evil consists in the base use to which higher forces are put, or to

which Life—which is sacred—is put, so that here also evil does not inhere in them, but in ourselves; in our misuse of noble instruments in lower work. Nor does evil inhere in us, but in our ignorance; it is one of the great illusions of Nature. All these illusions cause the soul to experience in matter until it has consciously learned every part: then it must learn to know the whole and all at once, which it can only do by and through re-union with Spirit; or with the Supreme, with the Deity.

If we take, with all due reverence, so much of the standpoint of the Supreme as our finite minds or our dawning intuition may permit, we feel that he stands above unmoved by either Good or Evil. Our good is relative, and evil is only the limitation of the soul by matter. From the material essence of the Deity all the myriad differentiations of Nature (Prakriti, cosmic substance), all the worlds and their correlations are evolved. They assist the cyclic experience of the soul as it passes from state to state. How, then, shall we say that any state is evil in an absolute sense? Take murder. It seems an evil. True, we cannot *really* take life, but we can destroy a vehicle of the divine Principle of Life and impede the course of a soul using that vehicle. But we are more injured by the deed than any other. It is the fruit of a certain unhealthy state of the soul. The deed sends us to hell, as it were, for one or more incarnations; to a condition of misery. The shock, the natural retribution, our own resultant Karma, both the penalties imposed by man and that exacted by occult law, chasten and soften the soul. It is passed through a most solemn experience which had become necessary to its growth and which in the end is the cause of its additional purification. In view of this result, was the deed evil? It was a necessary consequence of the limitations of matter; for had the soul remained celestial and in free Being, it could not have com-

mitted murder. Nor has the immortal soul, the spectator, any share in the wrong; it is only the personality, the elementary part of the soul, which has sinned. All that keeps the soul confined to material existence is evil, and so we cannot discriminate either. The only ultimate good is Unity, and in reality nothing but that exists. Hence our judgments are in time only. Nor have we the right to exact a life for a life. "Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord (Law); I will repay." We become abettors of murder in making such human laws. I do not say that every experience must be gone through bodily, because some are lived out in the mind. Nor do I seek to justify any. The only justification is in the Law.

The innocent man unjustly murdered is rewarded by Karma in a future life. Indeed, any man murdered is reimbursed, so to say; for while that misfortune sprang from his Karma, occult law does not admit of the taking of life. Some men are the weapons of Karma in their wrong-doing, but they themselves have appointed this place to themselves in their past.

The Great Soul needed just that body, whatever the errors of its nature or its physical environment, and to disappoint the soul is a fearful deed for a man. For it is only man, only the lower nature under the influence of Tamas (the quality of darkness), which feels the impulse to take life, whether in human justice, for revenge, for protection, or so on. "The soul neither kills nor is killed." What we know as ourselves is only the natural man, the lower principles and mind, presided over by the false consciousness. Of the soul we have but brief and partial glimpses—in conscience or intuition—in our ordinary state. There are, of course, psychic and spiritual states in which more is known. Thus nature wars against nature, always for the purpose of bringing about the purification and evolution of the soul.

Nature exists only for the purpose of the soul. If we think out the subject upon these lines, we can at least see how rash we should be to conclude that any deed was unmixed evil, or that these distinctions exist in the Absolute. It alone is; all else is phenomenal and transitory; these differences disappear as we proceed upward. Meanwhile we are to avoid all these immoral things and many others not so regarded by the crowd at all, but which are just as much so because we know to what increased ignorance and darkness they give rise through the ferment which they cause in the nature, and that this impedes the entrance of the clear rays of Truth.

I doubt that the soul knows the moral or immoral. For just consider for a moment the case of a disembodied soul. What is sin to it when freed from that shell—the body? What does it know then of human laws or moralities, or the rules and forms of matter? Does it even see them? What lewdness can it commit? So I say that these moralities are of this plane only, to be heeded and obeyed there, but not to be postulated as final or used as a balance to weigh the soul which has other laws. The free soul has to do with essences and powers all impersonal; the strife of matter is left behind. Still higher and above as within all, the passionless, deathless spirit looks down, knowing well that, when the natural has once again subsided into its spiritual source, all this struggle and play of force and will, this waxing and waning of forms, this progression of consciousness which throw up coming clouds and fumes of illusion before the eye of the soul, will have come to an end. Even now, while we cannot master these high themes, we can have a patient trust in the processes of evolution and the Law, blaming and judging no man, but living up to our highest intuitions ourselves. *The real test of a man is his motive*, which we do not see, nor do his acts always represent it.

J. N.

X.

DEAR JASPER:



YOU ask me about the "three qualities sprung from Nature", mentioned in the *Bhagavad-Gītā*. They exist potentially (latent) in *Purush* (Spirit), and during that time spoken of in the *Bhagavad-Gītā* as the time when He produces all things after having devoured them (which is the same thing as Saturn devouring his children), they come forth into activity, and therefore are found *implicating* all beings, who are said not to be free from their influence.

"Beings" here must refer to formed beings in all worlds. Therefore in these forms the qualities *exist* [for *form* is derived from Nature=Prakriti=Cosmic Substance.—J. N.], and at the same time *implicate* the spectator (soul) who is in the form. The *Devas* are gods—that is, a sort of spiritual power who are lower than the *Ishwara* in man. They are influenced by the quality of *Satwa*, or Truth. They enjoy a period of immense felicity of enormous duration, but which having *duration* is not an eternity.

It is written; "Goodness, badness, and indifference—the qualities thus called—sprung from Nature, influence the imperishable soul within the body."

This imperishable soul is thus separated from the body in which the qualities influence it, and also from the qualities which are not it. It is *Ishwara*. The *Ishwara* is thus implicated by the qualities.

The first or highest quality is *Satwa*, which is in its nature pure and pleasant, and implicates *Ishwara* by connection with pleasant things and with knowledge. Thus even by dwelling in *Satwa* the soul is implicated.

The second quality is *Raja* and causes action; it

implicates the soul because it partakes of avidity and propensity, and causing actions thus implicates the soul.

The third, Tamo quality, is of the nature of indifference and is the deluder of all mortals. It is fed by ignorance.

Here, then, are two great opposers to the soul, *ignorance* and *action*. For action proceeding from Raja assisted by Satwa does not lead to the highest place; while ignorance causes destruction. Yet when one knows that he is ignorant, he has to perform actions in order to destroy that ignorance. How to do that without always revolving in the whirl of action [Karma, causing rebirths.—J. N.] is the question.

He must first get rid of the idea that he himself really does anything, knowing that the actions all take place in these three natural qualities, and not in the soul at all. The word "qualities" must be considered in a larger sense than that word is generally given.

Then he must place all his actions on devotion. That is, sacrifice all his actions to the Supreme and not to himself. He must either (leaving out indifference) set himself up as the God to whom he sacrifices, or the other real God—Krishna, and all his acts and aspirations are done either for himself or for the All. Here comes in the importance of motive. For if he performs great deeds of valor, or of benefit to man, or acquires knowledge so as to assist man, and is moved to that merely because he thinks *he* will attain salvation, he is only acting for his own benefit and is therefore sacrificing to himself. Therefore he must be devoted inwardly to the All; that is, he places all his actions on the Supreme, knowing that he is not the doer of the actions, but is the mere witness of them.

As he is in a mortal body, he is affected by doubts which will spring up. When they do arise, it is be-

cause he is ignorant about something. He should therefore be able to disperse doubt "by the sword of knowledge". For if he has a ready answer to some doubt, he disperses that much. All doubts come from the lower nature, and *never* in any case from higher nature. Therefore as he becomes more and more devoted he is able to know more and more clearly the knowledge residing in his Satwa part. For it says:

"A man who, perfected in devotion (or who persists in its cultivation) finds spiritual knowledge spontaneously in himself in progress of time." Also: "The man of doubtful mind enjoys neither this world nor the other (the Deva world), nor final beatitude."

The last sentence is to destroy the idea that if there is in us this higher self it will, even if we are indolent and doubtful, triumph over the necessity for knowledge, and lead us to final beatitude in common with the whole stream of man.

The three qualities are lower than a state called Turya, which is a high state capable of being enjoyed even while in this body. Therefore in that state, there exists none of the three qualities, but there the soul sees the three qualities moving in the ocean of Being beneath. This experience is not only met with after death, but, as I said, it may be enjoyed in the present life, though of course consciously very seldom. But even consciously there are those high Yogees who can and do rise up to Nirvana, or Spirit, while on the earth. This state is the fourth state, called Turya. There is no word in English which will express it. In that state the body is alive though in deep catalepsy. [Self-induced by the Adept.—J. N.] When the Adept returns from it he brings back *whatever he can* of the vast experiences of that Turya state. Of course they are far beyond any expression, and their possibilities can be only dimly per-

ceived by us. I cannot give any description thereof because I have not known it, but I perceive the possibilities, and you probably can do the same.

It is well to pursue some kind of practice, and pursue it either in a fixed place, or in a mental place which cannot be seen, or at night. The fact that what is called Dharana, Dhyana, and Samádhi may be performed should be known. (See Patanjali's yoga system.)

Dharana is selecting a thing, a spot, or an idea, to fix the mind on.

Dhyana is contemplation of it.

Samádhi in meditating on it.

When attempted, they of course are all one act.

Now, then, take what is called the well of the throat or pit of the throat.

1st. Select it.—Dharana.

2d. Hold the mind on it.—Dhyana.

3d. Meditate on it.—Samádhi.

This gives firmness of mind.

Then select the spot in the head where the Shushumna nerve goes. Never mind the location; call it the top of the head. Then pursue the same course. This will give some insight into spiritual minds. At first it is difficult, but it will grow easy by practice. If done at all, the same hour of each day should be selected, as creating a habit, not only in the body, but also in the mind. Always keep the direction of Krishna in mind: namely, that it is done for the whole body corporate of humanity, and not for one's self.

As regards the passions: Anger seems to be the *force* of Nature; there is more in it, though.

Lust (so called) is the gross symbol of love and desire to create. It is the perversion of the True in love and desire.

Vanity, I think, represents in one aspect the illusion—power of Nature; Maya, that which we mis-

take for the reality. It is nearest always to us and most insidious, just as Nature's illusion is ever present and difficult to overcome.

Anger and Lust have some of the Rajasika quality; but it seems to me that Vanity is almost wholly of the Tamogunam.

May you cross over to the fearless shore. Z.

As regards the practices of concentration suggested in this letter, they are only stages in a life-long contemplation; they are means to an end, means of a certain order among means of other orders, all necessary, the highest path being that of constant devotion and entire resignation to the Law. The above means have a physiological value because the spots suggested for contemplation are, like others, vital centers. Excitation of these centers, and of the magnetic residue of breath always found in them, strengthens and arouses the faculties of the inner man, the magnetic vehicle of the soul and the link between matter and spirit. This is a form of words necessary for clearness, because in reality matter and spirit are one. We may better imagine an infinite series of force correlations which extend from pure Spirit to its grossest vehicle, and we may say that the magnetic inner vehicle, or astral man, stands at the halfway point of the scale. The secret of the circulation of the nervous fluid is hidden in these vital centers, and he who discovers it can use the body at will. Moreover, this practice trains the mind to remain in its own principle, without energizing, and without exercising its tangential force, which is so hard to overcome. Thought has a self-reproductive power, and when the mind is held steadily to one idea it becomes colored by it, and, as we may say, all the correlates of that thought arise within the mind. Hence the mystic obtains knowledge about any object of which he thinks constantly in fixed contemplation.

Here is the rationale of Krishna's words: "Think constantly of me; depend on me alone; and thou shalt surely come unto me."

The pure instincts of children often reveal occult truths. I heard a girl of fifteen say recently: "When I was a small child I was always supposin'. I used to sit on the window seat and stare, stare, at the moon, and I was supposin' that, if I only stared long enough, I'd get there and know all about it."

Spiritual culture is attained through concentration. It must be continued daily and every moment to be of use. The "Elixir of Life" (*Five Years of Theosophy*) gives us some of the reasons for this truth. Meditation has been defined as "the cessation of active, external thought." Concentration is the entire life-tendency to a given end. For example, a devoted mother is one who consults the interests of her children and all branches of their interests in and before all things; not one who sits down to think fixedly about one branch of their interests all the day. Life is the great teacher; it is the great manifestation of Soul, and Soul manifests the Supreme. Hence all methods are good, and all are but parts of the great aim, which is Devotion. "Devotion is success in actions," says the *Bhagavad-Gîtâ*. We must use higher and lower faculties alike, and beyond those of mind are those of the Spirit, unknown but discoverable. The psychic powers, as they come, must also be used, for they reveal laws. But their value must not be exaggerated, nor must their danger be ignored. They are more subtle intoxicants than the gross physical energies. He who relies upon them is like a man who gives way to pride and triumph because he has reached the first wayside station on the peaks he has set out to climb. Like despondency, like doubt, like fear, like vanity, pride, and self-satisfaction, these powers too are used by Nature as traps to detain us. Every occurrence, every object,

every energy may be used for or against the great end: in each Nature strives to contain Spirit, and Spirit strives to be free. Shall the substance paralyze the motion, or shall the motion control the substance? The interrelation of these two is manifestation. The ratio of activity governs spiritual development; when the great Force has gained its full momentum, It carries us to the borders of the Unknown. It is a Force intelligent, self-conscious, and spiritual: its lower forms, or vehicles, or correlates may be evoked by us, but Itself comes only of Its own volition. We can only prepare a vehicle for It, in which, as Behmen says, "the Holy Ghost may ride in Its own chariot."

"The Self cannot be known by the *Vedas*, nor by the understanding, nor by much learning. He whom the Self chooses, by him alone the Self can be gained."

"The Self chooses him as his own. But the man who has not first turned aside from his wickedness, who is not calm and subdued, *or whose mind is not at rest*, he can never obtain the Self, even by knowledge."

The italics are mine; they indicate the value of that stage of contemplation hitherto referred to as that in which the mind has ceased to energize, and when the pure energies of Nature go to swell the fountain of Spirit.

In regard to the phrase in the above letter that the Adept "brings back *what he can*" from Turya, it is to be understood as referring to the fact that all depends upon the coördination of the various principles in man. He who has attained perfection or Mahâtma-ship has assumed complete control of the body and informs it at will. But, of course, while in the body he is still, to some extent, as a soul of power, limited by that body or vehicle. That is to say, there are experiences not to be shared by that organ of the soul

called by us "the body", and beyond a certain point its brain cannot reflect or recall them. This point varies according to the degree of attainment of individual souls, and while in some it may be a high point of great knowledge and power, still it must be considered as limited compared with those spiritual experiences of the freed soul.

The work upon which all disciples are employed is that of rendering the body more porous, more fluidic, more responsive to all spiritual influences which arise in the inner center, in the soul which is an undivided part of the great Soul of all, and less receptive of the outside material influences which are generated by the unthinking world and by those qualities which are in nature. Abstract thought is said to be "the power of thinking of a thing apart from its qualities;" but these qualities are the phenomenal, the evident, and they make the most impression upon our senses. They bewilder us, and they form a part of that trap which Nature sets for us lest we discover her inmost secret and rule her. More than this: our detention as individual components of a race provides time for that and other races to go through evolutionary experience slowly, provides long and repeated chances for every soul to amend, to return, to round the curve of evolution. In this Nature is most merciful, and even in the darkness of the eighth sphere to which souls of *spiritual* wickedness descend, her impulses provide opportunities of return if a single responsive energy is left in the self-condemned soul.

Many persons insist upon a perfect moral code tempered by social amenities, forgetting that these vary with climate, nationalities, and dates. Virtue is a noble offering to the Lord. But inasmuch as it is mere bodily uprightness and mere mental uprightness, it is insufficient and stands apart from uprightness of the psychic nature or the virtue of

soul. The virtue of the soul is true Being; its virtue is, to be free. The body and the mind are not sharers in such experiences, though they may afterward reflect them, and this reflection may inform them with light and power of their own kind. Spirituality is not virtue. It is impersonality, in one aspect. It is as possible to be spiritually "wicked" as to be spiritually "good". These attributes are only conferred upon spirituality by reason of its use for or against the great evolutionary Law, which must finally prevail because it is the Law of the Deity, an expression of the nature and Being of the Unknown, which nature is towards manifestation, self-realization, and reabsorption. All that clashes with this Law by striving for separate existence must in the long run fail, and any differentiation which is in itself incapable of reabsorption is reduced to its original elements, in which shape, so to say, it can be reabsorbed.

Spirituality is, then, a condition of Being which is beyond expression in language. Call it a rate of vibration, far beyond our cognizance. Its language is the language of motion, in its incipency, and its perfection is beyond words and even thought.

"The knowledge of the Supreme Principle is a divine silence, and the quiescence of all the senses."
—(*Clavis of Hermes.*)

"Likes and dislikes, good and evil, do not in the least affect the knower of Brahm, who is bodiless and always existing."—(*Crest Jewel of Wisdom.*)

"Of that nature which is beyond intellect many things are asserted according to intellect, but it is contemplated by a cessation of intellectual energy better than with it."—(*Porphyrus.*)

Thought is bounded, and we seek to enter the boundless. The intellect is the first production of Nature which energizes for the experience of the soul, as I said. When we recognize this truth we


make use of that natural energy called Thought for comparison, instruction, and the removal of doubt, and so reach a point where we restrain the outward tendencies of Nature, for, when these are resolved into their cause and Nature is wholly conquered and restrained, that cause manifests itself both in and beyond Nature.

“The incorporeal substances in descending are divided and multiplied about individuals with a diminution of power; but when they ascend by their energies beyond bodies, they become united and exist as a whole by and through exuberance of power.— (*Porphyrios.*)

These hints may suffice for such minds as are already upon the way. Others will be closed to them. Language only expresses the experiences of a race, and since ours has not reached the upper levels of Being we have as yet no words for these things. The East has ever been the home of spiritual research; she has given all the great religions to the world. The Sanscrit has thus terms for some of these states and conditions, but even in the East it is well understood that the formless cannot be expressed by form, or the Illimitable by the limits of words or signs. The only way to know these states is to *be* them: we never can *really* know anything which we are not.

J. N.

XI.

T has been with regret that I hear of your serious illness, Jasper. While life hangs in the balance, as it would seem yours does and for some time will, you will feel much depression.

Now it is not usual to thus calmly talk to a person of his death, but you do not mind, so I talk. I do

not agree with you that death is well. Yours is not a case like that of — who *was* to die and decided to accept life from Great Powers and work on for Humanity amid all the throes and anguish of that body. Why should you not live now as long as you can in the present body, so that in it you may make all the advance possible and by your life do as much good as you can to the Cause and man? For you have not yet as Jasper Niemand had a chance to entitle you to *extraordinary* help after death in getting back again soon, so that you would die and run the chance of a long Devachan and miss much that you might do for *Them*. Such are my views. Life is better than death, for death again disappoints the Self. Death is *not* the great informer or producer of knowledge. It is only the great curtain on the stage to be rung up next instant. Complete knowledge must be attained in the triune man: body, soul, and spirit. When that is obtained, then he passes on to other spheres, which to us are unknown and are endless. By living as long as one can, one gives the Self that longer chance.

“Atmanam atmana pashya” (Raise the Self by the self—*Gîtâ*) does not seem to be effective after the threshold of death is passed. The union of the trinity is only to be accomplished on earth in a body, and *then* release is desirable.

It is not for myself that I speak, Brother, but for thee, because in death I can lose no one. The living have a greater part in the dead than the dead have in the living.

The doubt which you now feel as to success is morbid. Please destroy it. Better a false hope with no doubt, than much knowledge with doubts of your own chances. “He that doubteth is like the waves of the sea, driven by the wind and tossed.” Doubt is not to be solely guarded against when applied to Masters (whom I know you doubt not). It is most to be

guarded and repelled in relation to oneself. Any idea that one cannot succeed, or had better die than live because an injured body seems to make success unattainable, is *doubt*.

We dare not hope, but we *dare* try to live on and on that we may serve Them as They serve the Law. We are not to try to be chelas or to do any one thing in this incarnation, but only to know and to be just as much as we can, and the possibility is not measured. Reflect, then, that it only a question of being overcome—by what? By something outside. But if you accuse or doubt yourself, you then give the enemy a rest; he has nothing to do, for you do it all yourself for him, and, leaving you to your fate, he seeks other victims. Rise, then, from this despondency and seize the sword of knowledge. With it, and with Love, the universe is conquerable. Not that I see thee too despondent, Jasper, but I fain would give thee my ideas, even did something kill thee against our will next day.

Am glad that although the body is painful, you yourself are all right. We have in various ways to suffer, and I do not doubt it is a great advance if we can in the midst of physical suffering grasp and hold ourselves calm and away from it. Yet also the body must be rested. Rest, and let the anxieties to do lie still and dormant. By that they are not killed, and when the body gets stronger more is known.

You have been in storms enough. A few moments' reflection will show you that we make our own storms. The power of any and all circumstances is a fixed, unvarying quality, but as *we* vary in our reception of these, it appears to us that our difficulties vary in intensity. They do not at all. We are the variants.

If we admit that we are in the stream of evolution, then each circumstance must be to us quite right. And in our failures to perform set acts should be our

greatest helps, for we can in no other way learn that calmness which Krishna insists upon. If all our plans succeeded, then no contrasts would appear to us. Also those plans we make may all be made ignorantly and thus wrongly, and kind Nature will not permit us to carry them out. We get no blame for the plan, but we may acquire Karmic demerit by not accepting the impossibility of achieving. Ignorance of the law cannot be pleaded among men, but ignorance of fact may. In occultism, even if you are ignorant of some facts of importance you are not passed over by *The Law*, for It has regard for no man, and pursues Its adjustments without regard to what we know or are ignorant of.

If you are at all cast down, or if any of us is, then by just that much are our thoughts lessened in power. One could be confined in a prison and yet be a worker for the Cause. So I pray you to remove from your mind any distaste for present circumstances. If you can succeed in looking at it all as *just what you in fact desired*, then it will act not only as a strengthener of your good thoughts, but will reflexly act on your body and make it stronger.

All this reminds me of H., of whose failure you now know. And in this be not disappointed. It could hardly be otherwise. Unwisely he made his demands upon the Law before being quite ready. That is, unwisely in certain senses, for in the greater view naught can be unwise. His apparent defeat, at the very beginning of the battle, is for him quite of course. He went where the fire is hottest and made it hotter by his aspirations. All others have and all will suffer the same. For it makes no difference that his is a bodily affection; as all these things proceed from mental disturbances, we can easily see the same cause under a physical ailment as under a mental divagation. Strangely, too, I wrote you of the few who really do stay, and soon after this news

came and threw a light—a red one, so to say—upon the information of H's retreat. See how thought interlinks with thought on all planes when the True is the aim.

We ourselves are not wholly exempt, inasmuch as we daily and hourly feel the strain. Accept the words of a fellow traveller; these: Keep up the aspiration and the search, but do not maintain the attitude of despair or the slightest repining. Not that you do. I cannot find the right words; but surely you would know all, were it not that some defects hold you back.

The darkness and the desolation are sure to be ours, but it is only illusionary. Is not the Self pure, bright, bodiless, and free,—and art thou not that? The daily waking life is but a penance and the trial of the body, so that *it* too may thereby acquire the right condition. In dreams we see the truth and taste the joys of heaven. In waking life it is ours to gradually distill that dew into our normal consciousness.

Then, too, remember that the influences of this present age are powerful for producing these feelings. What despair and agony of doubt exist to-day in all places. In this time of upturning, the wise man *waits*. He bends himself, like the reed, to the blast, so that it may blow over his head. Rising, as you do, into the plane where these currents are rushing while you try to travel higher still, you feel these inimical influences, although unknown to you. It is an age of iron. A forest of iron trees, black and forbidding, with branches of iron and brilliant leaves of steel. The winds blow through its arches and we hear a dreadful grinding and crashing sound that silences the still small voice of Love. And its inhabitants mistake this for the voice of God; they imitate it and add to its terrors. Faint not, be not self-condemned. We both are that soundless OM; we rest together upon the bosom of Master. You are not

tired; it is that body, now weak, and not only weak but shaken by the force of your own powers, physical and psychical. But the wise man learns to assume in the body an attitude of carelessness that is more careful really than any other. Let that be yours. You are judge. Who accepts you, who dares judge but yourself? Let us wait, then, for natural changes, knowing that if the eye is fixed where the light shines, we shall presently know what to do. This hour is not ripe. But unripe fruit gets ripe, and falls or is plucked. The day must surely strike when you will pluck it down. You are no longer troubled by vain fears or compromises. When the great thought comes near enough, you will go. We must all be servants before we can hope to be masters in the least.

I have been re-reading the life of Buddha, and it fills me with a longing desire to give myself for humanity, to devote myself to a fierce, determined effort to plant myself nearer the altar of sacrifice. As I do not always know just what ought to be done, I must stand on what Master says: "Do what you *can*, if you ever expect to see Them." This being true, and another Adept saying, "Follow the Path They and I show, but do not follow *my* path," why, then, all we can do, whether great or small, is to do just what we can, each in his proper place. It is sure that if we have an immense devotion and do our best, the result will be right for Them and us, even though we would have done otherwise had we known more when we were standing on a source of action. A devoted Chela once said: "I do not mind all these efforts at explanation and all this trouble, for I always have found that that which was done in Master's name was right and came out right." What is done in those names is done without thought of self, and motive is the essential test.

So I am sad and not sad. Not sad when I reflect

on the great Ishwar, the Lord, permitting all these antics and shows before our eyes. Sad when I see our weakness and disabilities. We must be serene and do what we can. Ramaswamier rushed off into Sikkhim to try and find Master, and met someone who told him to go back *and do his duty*. That is all any of us can do; often we do not know our duty, but that too is our own fault; it is a Karmic disability.

You ask me how you shall advise your fellow student. The best advice is found in your own letter to me in which you say that the true monitor is within. That is so. Ten thousand Adepts can do one no great good unless we ourselves are ready, and They only act as suggestors to us of what possibilities there are in every human heart. If we dwell within ourselves, and must live and die by ourselves, it must follow that running here and there to see any thing or person does not in itself give progress. Mind, I do not oppose consorting with those who read holy books and are engaged in dwelling on high themes, I am only trying to illustrate my idea that this should not be dwelt on as an end; it is only a means and one of many. There is no help like association with those who think as we do, or like the reading of good books. The best advice I ever saw was to read holy books or whatever books tend to elevate yourself, as you have found by experience. There must be some. Once I found some abstruse theological writings of Plotinus to have that effect on me—very ennobling, and also an explanation of the wanderings of Ulysses. Then there is the *Gîtâ*. All these *are instinct with a life of their own* which changes the vibrations. Vibration is the key to it all. The different states are only differences of vibration, and we do not recognize the astral or other planes because we are out of tune with their vibrations. This is why we now and then dimly feel that others are peering at us, or as if a

host of people rushed by us with great things on hand, not seeing us and we not seeing them. It was an instant of synchronous vibration. But the important thing is to develop the Self in the self, and then the possessions of wisdom belonging to all wise men at once belong to us.

Each one would see the Self differently and would yet never see it, for to see it is to *be* it. But for making words we say, "See it." It might be a flash, a blazing wheel, or what not. Then there is the lower self, great in its way, and which must first be known. When first we see it, it is like looking into a glove, and for how many incarnations may it not be so? We look inside the glove and there is darkness; then we have to *go inside* and see that, and so on and on.

The mystery of the ages is man; each one of us. Patience is needed in order that the passage of time required for the bodily instrument to be altered or controlled is complete. Violent control is not as good as gentle control continuous and firmly unrelaxed. The Seeress of Prevorst found that a gentle current did her more good than a violent one would. Gentleness is better because an opposition current is always provoked, and of course if that which produces it is gentle, it will also be the same. This gives the unaccustomed student more time and gradual strength.

I think your fellow-student will be a good instrument, but we must not break the silence of the future lest we raise up unknown and difficult tribes who will not be easy to deal with.

Every situation ought to be used as a means. This is better than philosophy, for it enables us to know philosophy. You do not progress by studying other people's philosophies, for then you do but get their crude ideas. Do not crowd yourself, nor ache to puzzle your brains with another's notions. You have the key to self and that is all; take it and drag out

the lurker inside. You are great in generosity and love, strong in faith, and straight in perception. Generosity and love are the abandonment of self. That is your staff. Increase your confidence, not in your abilities, but in the great All being thyself.

I would to God you and all the rest might find peace. Z.

XII.

DEAR JASPER:



HERE are so many questioners who ask about Chelaship* that your letter comes quite apropos to experiences of my own.

You say that these applicants must have some answer, and in that I agree with you. And whether they are ready or unready, we must be able to tell them something. But generally they are not ready, nor, indeed, are they willing to take the first simple step which is demanded. I will talk the matter over with you for your future guidance in replying to such questions; perhaps also to clear up my own mind.

The first question a man should ask himself (and by "man" we mean postulants of either sex) is: "When and how did I get a desire to know about chelaship and to become a chela?"; and secondly, "What is a chela, and what chelaship?"

There are many sorts of chelas. There are lay chelas and probationary ones; accepted chelas and those who are trying to fit themselves to be even lay chelas. Any person can constitute himself a lay chela, feeling sure that he may never in this life consciously hear from his guide. Then as to probationary chelas, there is an *invariable* rule that they go

* Chela means disciple. It is a Sanscrit word.—J. N.

upon seven years' trial. These "trials" do not refer to fixed and stated tests, but to all the events of life and the bearing of the probationer in them. There is no *place* to which applicants can be referred where their request could be made, because these matters do not relate to places and to officials: this is an affair of the inner nature. We *become* chelas; we obtain that position in reality because our inner nature is to that extent opened that it can and will take knowledge: we receive the guerdon at the hands of the Law.

In a certain sense every sincere member of the Theosophical Society is in the way of becoming a chela, because the Masters do some of Their work with and for humanity through this Society, selected by Them as Their agent. And as *all* Their work and aspiration are to the end of helping the race, no one of Their chelas can hope to remain (or become) such, if any selfish desire for personal possessions of spiritual wealth constitutes the motive for trying to be a chela. Such a motive, in the case of one already a chela, acts instantly to throw him out of the ranks, whether he be aware of his loss or not, and in the case of one trying to become a chela it acts as a *bar*. Nor does a real chela spread the fact that he is such. For this Lodge is not like exoteric societies which depend upon favor or mere outward appearances. It is a real thing with living Spirit - men at its head, governed by laws that contain within themselves their own executioners, and that do not require a tribunal, nor accusations, nor verdicts, nor any notice whatever.

As a general thing a person of European or American birth has extreme difficulty to contend with. He has no heredity of psychical development to call upon; no known assembly of Masters or Their chelas within reach. His racial difficulties prevent him from easily seeing within himself; he is not introspective by nature. But even he can do much if he purifies his motive,

and either naturally possesses or cultivates an ardent and unshakeable faith and devotion. A faith that keeps him a firm believer in the existence of Masters even through years of non-intercourse. They are generous and honest debtors and always repay. How They repay, and when, is not for us to ask. Men may say that this requires as blind devotion as was ever asked by any Church. *It does*, but it is a blind devotion to Masters who are Truth itself; to Humanity and to yourself, to your own intuitions and ideals. This devotion to an ideal is also founded upon another thing, and that is that a man is hardly ready to be a chela unless he is able to stand *alone* and uninfluenced by other men or events, *for he must stand alone*, and he might as well know this at the beginning as at the end.

There are also certain qualifications which he must possess. These are to be found in *Man, a Fragment of Forgotten History* towards the close of the book, so we will not dwell upon them here.

The question of the general fitness of applicants being disposed of, we come to the still more serious point of the relations of Guru and Chela, or Master and Disciple. We want to know what it really is to be a pupil of such a Teacher.

The relation of Guru and Chela is nothing if it is not a spiritual one. Whatever is merely outward, or formal, as the relation established by mere asking and acceptance, is not spiritual, but formal, and is that which arises between *teacher* and *pupil*. Yet even this latter is not in any way despicable, because the teacher stands to his pupil, in so far forth as the relation permits, in the same way as the Guru to his Chela. It is a difference of degree; but this difference of degree is what constitutes the distinction between the spiritual and the material, for, passing along the different shadings from the grossest materiality to as far as we can go, we find at last that matter merges

into spirit. (We are now speaking, of course, about what is commonly called *matter*, while we well know that in truth the thing thus designated is not really matter, but an enormous illusion which in itself has no existence. The real matter, called *mulaprakriti* by the Hindus, is an invisible thing or substance of which our matter is a representation. The real matter is what the Hermetists called *primordial earth*; a, for us, intangible phase of matter. We can easily come to believe that what is usually called *matter* is not really such, inasmuch as we find clairvoyants and nervous people seeing through thick walls and closed doors. Were this *matter*, then they could not see through it. But when an ordinary clairvoyant comes face to face with *primordial matter*, he or she cannot see beyond, but is met by a dead wall more dense than any wall ever built by human hands.)

So from earliest times, among all but the modern western people, the teacher was given great reverence by the pupil, and the latter was taught from youth to look upon his preceptor as only second to his father and mother in dignity. It was among these people a great sin, a thing that did one actual harm in his moral being, to be disrespectful to his teacher even in thought. The reason for this lay then, and no less to-day does also lie, in the fact that a long chain of influence extends from the highest spiritual guide who may belong to any man, down through vast numbers of spiritual chiefs, ending at last even in the mere teacher of our youth. Or, to restate it in modern reversion of thought, a chain extends up from our teacher or preceptors to the highest spiritual chief in whose ray or descending line one may happen to be. And it makes no difference whatever, in this occult relation, that neither pupil nor final guide may be aware, or admit, that this is the case.

Thus it happens that the child who holds his teacher in reverence and diligently applies himself

accordingly with faith, does no violence to this intangible but mighty chain, and is benefited accordingly, whether he knows it or not. Nor again does it matter that a child has a teacher who evidently gives him a bad system. This is his Karma, and by his reverent and diligent attitude he works it out, and transcends erstwhile that teacher.

This chain of influence is called the *Guruparampara chain*.

The Guru is the *guide or readjuster*, and may not always combine the function of teacher with it.

Z.

XIII.

DEAR JASPER:



E now have passed from the mere usual and worldly relations of teacher and pupil to that which we will call the *Lodge* for the nonce.

This Lodge is not to be taken up in the pincers of criticism and analyzed or fixed. It is at once everywhere and nowhere. It contains within its boundaries all real Masters, students, guides, and Gurus, of whatever race or creed or no creed. Of it has been said:

“Beyond the Hall of Learning is the Lodge. It is the whole body of Sages in all the world. It cannot be described even by those who are in it, but the student is not prohibited from imagining what it is like.”

So therefore at any time any one of its real teachers or disciples will gladly help any other teacher or disciple. But we are not to conclude that, because all are trying to spread truth and to teach the world, we, who call ourselves chela-aspirants or known chelas of any certain person whom we call Guru, can place our-

selves at the same moment under the *direct* tutelage of more than one Guru.

Each man who determines in himself that he will enter the Path, has a Guru. But the time between that determination and the hour when he will really know The Master may be long indeed; in some cases it is very short.

We must now occupy a moment in some consideration of divisions.

Just as the merest private in the army has a general who guides the whole but whom he cannot reach except through the others who are officers, so in this order we find divisions of Gurus as well as divisions of disciples.

There is the Great Guru, who is such to many who never know Him or see Him. Then there are others who know Him, and who are Gurus to a number of chelas, and so on until we may imagine a chela who may be a known Guru to another chela below him.

Then, again, there may be chelas who are acting as Guru—unacknowledged, because *pro tempore* in function—to one or more other chelas.

Now he who makes the resolution above-mentioned, does thereby make a bond that rests in the highest Law. It is not a thing to be lightly done, because its consequences are of a serious nature. Not serious in the way of disasters or awful torments or such, but serious in respect to the clearness and brilliancy of those rays of Truth which we wish to reach us.

We have thereby in a sense—its degree determined by the sincerity and power of our motive—taken ourselves out of the common, vast, moving herd of men who are living—as to this—like dumb animals, and have knocked at a door. If we have revered our teacher we will now revere our unknown Guru. We must stand interiorly in a faithful attitude. We must have an abiding, settled faith that nothing may shake. For it is to mighty Karma we have appealed, and as

the Guru is *Karma* in the sense that He never acts against Karma, we must not lose faith for an instant. For it is this faith that clears up the air there, and that enables us to get help from all quarters.

Then perhaps this determinant or postulant or neophyte decides for himself that he will for the time take as teacher or guide some other chela whose teachings commend themselves. It is not necessary that any out-spoken words should pass between these two.

But having done this, even in thought, he should then apply himself diligently to the doctrine of that teacher, not changing until he really finds he has another teacher or has gone to another class. For if he takes up one merely to dispute and disagree—whether outwardly or mentally, he is thereby in danger of totally obscuring his own mind.

If he finds himself not clearly understanding, then he should with faith try to understand, for if he by love and faith vibrates into the higher meaning of his teacher, his mind is thereby raised, and thus greater progress is gained.

We now come to the possible case of an aspirant of that royal and kingly faith who in some way has really found a person who has advanced far upon *the Path*. To this person he has applied and said: "May I be accepted, and may I be a chela of either thee or some other?"

That person applied to then perhaps says: "Not to me; but I refer you to some other of the same class as yourself, and give you to him to be his chela: serve him." With this the aspirant goes, say to the one designated, and deliberately both agree to it.

Here is a case where the real Master has recommended the aspirant to a co-worker who perchance is some grade higher than our neophyte, and the latter is now in a different position from the many others who are silently striving and working, and

learning from any and all teachers, but having no specialized Guru for themselves. This neophyte and his "little guru" are connected by a clear and sacred bond, or else both are mere lying children, playing and unworthy of attention. If the "little guru" is true to his trust, he occupies his mind and heart with it, and is to consider that the chela represents Humanity to him for the time.

We postulated that this "little guru" was in advance of the chela. It must then happen that he says that which is sometimes not clear to his chela. This will all the more be so if his chela is new to the matter. But the chela has deliberately taken that guru, and must try to understand *the doctrine of that teacher*.

The proper function of the Guru is to readjust, and not to pour in vast masses of knowledge expressed in clear and easily comprehended terms. The latter would be a piece of nonsense, however agreeable, and not any whit above what any well-written book would do for its reader.

The faith and love which exist between them act as a stimulus to both, and as a purifier to the mind of the chela.

But if the chela, after a while, meets another person who seems to know as much as his "little guru", and to express it in very easy terms, and the chela determines to take him as a teacher, he commits an error. He may listen to his teaching and admire and profit by it, but the moment he mentally determines and then in words asks the other to be his teacher, he begins to rupture the bond that was just established, and possibly may lose altogether the benefit of both. Not necessarily, however; but certainly, if he acquaints not his "little guru" with the fact of the new adoption of teacher, there will be much confusion in that realm of being wherein both do their real "work"; and when he does acquaint

his "little guru" with the fact of the newly-acquired teacher, that older guru will retire.

None of this is meant for those minds which do not regard these matters as sacred. A Guru is a sacred being in that sense. Not, of course, in a general sense—yet even if so regarded *when worthy* it is better for the chela,—but in all that pertains to the spiritual and real life. To the high-strung soul this is a matter of *adoption*; a most sacred and valuable thing, not lightly taken up or lightly dropped. For the Guru becomes for the time the spiritual *Father* of the chela; that one who is destined to bring him into life or to pass him on to Him who will do so.

So as the Guru is the *adjuster* in reality, the chela does not—except where the Guru is known to be a great Sage or where the chela does it by nature—give slavish attention to every word. He hears the word and endeavors to assimilate the meaning underneath; and if he cannot understand he lays it aside for a better time, while he presently endeavors to understand what he can. And if even—as is often so in India—he cannot understand at all, he is satisfied to be near the Guru and do what may properly be done for him; for even then his abiding faith will eventually clear his mind, of which there are many examples, and regarding which how appropriate is the line

"They also serve who only stand and wait." Z.

XIV.

DEAR JASPER:



WHAT I wrote in my last is what may be properly said to earnest inquirers who show by their perseverance that they are not mere idle curiosity-seekers, desirous of beguiling the tedium of life with new experiments and sensa-

tions. It is not *what* is done, but the spirit in which the least thing is done for Them who are all, that is counted.

You ask the names of the seven rays or lodges. The names could not be given if known to me. In these matters names are always realities, and consequently to give the name would be to reveal the thing itself. Besides, if the names were given, the ordinary person hearing them would not understand them. Just as if I should say that the name of the first is X, which expresses nothing at all to the mind of the hearing person. All that can be said is that there exist those seven rays, districts, or divisions, just as we say that in a town there are legislators, merchants, teachers, and servants. The difference is that in this case we know all about the town, and know just what those names mean. The name only directs the mind to the idea or essential quality.

Again I must go. But Brothers are never parted while they live for the True alone. Z.

The foregoing letters point clearly to one conclusion concerning that great Theosophist, Madame Blavatsky, though she is unnamed and perhaps unthought of there. Since she sacrificed—not so calling it herself—all that mankind holds dear to bring the glad tidings of Theosophy to the West, that West, and especially the Theosophical Society, thereby stands to her as a chela to his Guru, in so far as it accepts Theosophy. Her relation to these Theosophists has its being in the highest Law, and cannot be expunged or ignored. So those who regard her personality, and, finding it discordant from theirs, try to reach The Masters by other means *while disregarding or underrating scornfully her high services*, violate a rule which, because it is not made of man, cannot be broken with impunity. Gratitude and the common sentiment of man for man should have taught them

this, without occult teaching at all. Such persons have not reached that stage of evolution where they can learn the higher truths. She who accepts the pains of the rack in the torments of a body sapped of its life force by superb torrents of energy lavished on her high Cause; she who has braved the laughter and anger of two continents, and all the hosts of darkness seen and unseen; she who now lives on, only that she may take to herself the Karma of the Society and so ensure its well being, has no need of any man's praise; but even she has need of justice, because, without that impulse in our hearts and souls toward her, she knows that we must fail for this incarnation. As the babe to the mother, as harvest to the earth, so are all those bound to her who enjoy the fruit of her life. May we try, then, to understand these occult connections brought about by the workings of Karma, and bring them to bear upon our diurnal, as well as our theosophical, life. Madame Blavatsky is for us the next higher link in that great chain, of which no link can be passed over or missed.

In further illustration of this letter, I might cite the case of a friend of mine who was at once fired with Theosophy on first hearing of it and ardently desired to become a chela. Certainly he had known these truths in other lives, for all seemed familiar to him, and, though he was what is called "a man of the world," he accepted the philosophy, measured some of its possibilities intuitively, and while careful to do his duty and cause no jars, he ranged his life, especially his inner life, to suit these views. The question of chelaship assumed great prominence in his mind. He knew of no chelas; knew not where to knock or whom to ask. Reflection convinced him that real chelaship consisted in the inner attitude of the postulant; he remembered magnetic and energetic laws, and he said to himself that he could at will constitute himself a chela to the Law, at least so

far as his own attitude went, and if this did not satisfy him, it was a proof that he desired some personal reward, satisfaction, or powers in the matter, and that his motive was not pure. He was slow to formulate his desires, even to his own mind, for he would not lightly make demands upon the Law; but he at last determined to put his own motives to the test; to try himself and see if he could stand in the attitude of a faithful chela, unrecognized and apparently unheard. He then recorded in his own mind an obligation to serve Truth and the Law as a chela should, always seeking for light and for further aid if possible, recognizing meanwhile that the obligation was on his side only, and that he had no claims on Masters, and only such as he himself could by the strength of his own purpose institute upon the Law. Wherever he could hear of chelas and their duties he listened or read; he tried to imagine himself in the position of an accepted chela, and to fill, so far as in him lay, the duties of that place, living up to all the light he had. For he held that a disciple should always think and act towards the highest possibilities, whether or not he had yet attained these, and not merely confine himself to that course of action which might be considered suited to his lower class or spiritual estate. He believed that the heart is the creator of all real ties, and it alone. To raise himself by himself was then his task. This attitude he resolved to maintain life after life, if needs were, until at last his birthright should be assured, his claim recognized by the Law.

He met with trials, with coldness from those who felt rather than saw his changed attitude; he met with all the nameless shocks that others meet when they turn against the whirlpool of existence and try to find their way back into the true currents of life. Great sorrows and loneliness were not slow to challenge his indomitable will. But he found work to

do; and in this he was most fortunate, for to work for others is the disciple's joy, his share in the Divine life, his first accolade by which he may know that his service is accepted. This man had called upon the Law in faith supreme, and he was answered. Karma sent him a friend, and soon he began to get new knowledge, and after a time information reached him of a place or person where he might apply to become a chela on probation. It was not given him as information usually is; nothing of the sort was told him; but with his extending knowledge and opening faculties a conviction dawned upon him that he might pursue such and such a course. He did so, and his prayer was heard. He said to me afterwards that he never knew whether he would not have shown greater strength of mind by relying wholly upon the reality of his unseen, unacknowledged claim, until the moment should come when Masters should accept and call him. For of course he held the ideal of Masters clearly before his mind all this while. Perhaps his application showed him to be weaker than he supposed, in so far as it might evidence a need on his part for tangible proof of a fact in which his higher nature prompted him to believe without such proof. Perhaps it was but natural and right, on the other hand, that after silent service for some time he should put himself on record at the first opportunity granted him by Karma.

He applied, then. I am permitted to give a portion of the answer he received, and which made clear to him the fact that he was already accepted in some measure before his application, as his intuition had told him. The answer may be of untold value to others, both as clearly setting forth the dangers of forcing one's way ahead of one's race, and also by its advice, admonitions, and evidence that the Great Beings of the Orient deal most frankly and gently with applicants. Also it may mark out a course for those

who take the wise plan of testing themselves in silence before pushing their demands upon the Law. For this at once heightens their magnetic vibrations, their evolutionary ratio; their flame burns more brilliantly and attracts all kinds of shapes and influences within its radius, so that the fire is hot about him. And not for him alone: other lives coming in contact with his feel this fierce energy; they develop more rapidly, and, if they have a false or weak place in their nature, it is soon discovered and overthrows them for a time. This is the danger of coming into "the circle of ascetics"; a man must be strong indeed who thus thrusts himself in; it is better as a rule to place oneself in the attitude of a disciple and impose the tests oneself: less opposition is provoked. For forces that are foiled by the Adept may hurl themselves on the neophyte who cannot be protected unless his Karma permits it, and there are always those opposing forces of darkness waiting to thin the ranks of the servitors of the Good Law.

Up to this point, then, we may follow this student, and then we lose sight of him; not knowing whether he progressed or failed, or still serves and waits, because such things are not made known. To tell so much as this is rare, and, since it is permitted, it must be because there are many earnest students in this country who need some such support and information. To these I can say that, if they constitute themselves faithful, unselfish disciples, they are such in the knowledge of the Great Law, so long as they are true, in inmost thought and smallest deed, to the pledges of their heart.

ANSWER TO Y. Says Master:

"Is Y. fully prepared for the uphill work? The way to the goal he strives to reach is full of thorns and leads through miry quagmires. Many are the sufferings the chela has to encounter; still more numerous the dangers to face and conquer."

"May he think over it and choose only after due reflection. No Master appealed to by a sincere soul who thirsts for light and knowledge, has ever turned his face away from the suppliant. But it is the duty of those who call for laborers and need them for their fields, to point out to those who offer themselves in truth and trust for the arduous work, the pitfalls in the soil as the hardship of the task.

"If undaunted by this warning Y. persists in his determination, he may regard himself as accepted as——. Let him place himself in such case under the guidance of an older chela. By helping him sincerely and devotedly to carry on his heavy burden, he shall prepare the way for being helped in his turn."

(Here follow private instructions.)

"Verily if the candidate relies upon the Law, if he has patience, trust, and intuition, he will not have to wait too long. Through the great shadow of bitterness and sorrow that the opposing powers delight in throwing over the pilgrim on his way to the Gates of Light, the candidate perceives that shining Light very soon in his own soul, and he has but to follow it. Let him beware, however, lest he mistake the occasional will-o'-the-wisp of the psychic senses for the reflex of the great spiritual Light; that Light which dieth not, yet never lives, nor can it shine elsewhere than on the pure mirror of Spirit. . . .

"But Y. has to use his own intuitions. One has to dissipate and conquer the inner darkness before attempting to see into the darkness without; to know one's self before knowing things extraneous to one's senses."

And now, may the Powers to which my friend Y. has appealed be permitted by still greater and much higher Powers to help him. This is the sincere and earnest wish of his truly and fraternally, △

This letter also shows incidentally how one Adept may serve another still higher by reporting or conveying His reply.

TO ASPIRANTS FOR CHELASHIP.

Sincere interest in Theosophic truth is often followed by sincere aspiration after Theosophic life, and the question continually recurs, What are the conditions and the steps to chelaship; to whom should application be made; how is the aspirant to know that it has been granted?

As to the conditions and the discipline of chelaship, not a little has been disclosed in *The Theosophist*, *Man*, *Esoteric Buddhism*, and other works upon Theosophy; and some of the qualifications, difficulties, and dangers have been very explicitly set forth by Madame Blavatsky in her article upon "Theosophical Mahatmas" in the *Path* of December, 1886. To everyone cherishing even a vague desire for closer relations to the system of development through which Masters are produced, the thoughtful study of this article is earnestly commended. It will clear the ground of several misconceptions, deepen the sense of the seriousness of such an effort, and excite a healthy self-distrust which is better before than after the gate has been passed.

It is entirely possible, however, that the searching of desire and strength incited by that article may only convince more strongly of sincerity, and that not a few readers may emerge from it with a richer purpose and a deeper resolve. Even where there is not a distinct intention to reach chelaship, there may be an eager yearning for greater nearness to the Masters, for some definite assurance of guidance and of help. In either of these cases the question at once arises before the aspirant, Who is to receive the application, and how is its acceptance to be signified?

The very natural, indeed the instinctive, step of such an aspirant is to write to an officer of the Theo-

sophical Society. None the less is this a mistake. For the Theosophical Society is an *exoteric* body, the Lodge of Masters wholly *esoteric*. The former is a voluntary group of inquirers and philanthropists, with avowed aims, a printed Constitution, and published officers, and, moreover, expressly disavowing any power, as a Society, to communicate with Masters; the latter is an Occult Lodge, of whose address, members, processes, functions, nothing is known. It follows, therefore, that there is no person, no place, no address, to which an aspirant may appeal.

Let it be supposed, however, that such an inquiry is preferred to a person advanced in Occult study, versed in its methods and tests and qualifications. Assuredly his reply would be directly to this effect:—

“If you were now fitted to be an accepted chela, you would of yourself know how, where, and to whom to apply. For the becoming a chela *in reality* consists in the evolution or development of certain spiritual principles latent in every man, and in great measure unknown to your present consciousness. Until these principles are to some degree consciously evolved by you, you are not in practical possession of the means of acquiring the first rudiments of that knowledge which now seems to you so desirable. Whether it is desired by your mind or by your heart is still another important question, not to be solved by any one who has not yet the clew to Self.

“It is true that these qualities can be developed (or forced) by the aid of an Adept. And most applicants for chelaship are actuated by a desire to receive instructions directly from the Masters. They do not ask themselves what they have done to merit a privilege so rare. Nor do they consider that, all Adepts being servants of the Law of Karma, it must follow that, did the applicant now merit Their visible aid, he would already possess it and could not be in search of it. The indications of the fulfilment of the Law are,

in fact, the partial unfolding of those faculties above referred to.

“You must, then, reach a point other than that where you now stand, before you can even ask to be taken as a chela on probation. All candidates enter the unseen Lodge in this manner, and it is governed by Laws containing within themselves their own fulfilment and not requiring any officers whatever. Nor must you imagine that such a probationer is one who works under constant and known direction of either an Adept or another chela. On the contrary, he is tried and tested for at least seven years, and perhaps many more, before the point is reached when he is either accepted (and prepared for the first of a series of initiations often covering several incarnations), or rejected. And this rejection is not by any body of men just as they incline, but is the natural rejection by Nature. The probationer may or may not hear from his Teacher during this preliminary period; more often he does not hear. He may be finally rejected and not know it, just as some men have been on probation and have not known it until they suddenly found themselves accepted. Such men are those self-developed persons who have reached that point in the natural order after many incarnations, where their expanded faculties have entitled them to an entrance into the Hall of Learning or the spiritual Lodge beyond. And all I say of men applies equally to women.

“When anyone is regularly accepted as a chela on probation, the first and only order he receives (for the present) is to work unselfishly for humanity—sometimes aiding and aided by some older chela—*while striving to get rid of the strength of the personal idea*. The ways of doing this are left to his own intuition entirely, inasmuch as the object is to develop that *intuition* and to bring him to *self-knowledge*. It is his having these powers in some degree that leads to his

acceptance as a probationer, so that it is more than probable that you have them not yet save as latent possibilities. In order to have in his turn any title to help, he must work for others, but that must not be his motive for working. He who does not feel irresistibly impelled to serve the Race, whether he himself fails or not, is bound fast by his own personality and cannot progress until he has learned that *the race is himself* and not that body which he now occupies. The ground of this necessity for a pure motive was recently stated in *Lucifer* to be that 'unless the intention is entirely unalloyed, the spiritual will transform itself into the psychic, act on the astral plane, and dire results may be produced by it. The powers and forces of animal nature can be equally used by the selfish and revengeful as by the unselfish and all-forgiving; the powers and forces of spirit lend themselves only to the perfectly pure in heart.'

"It may be stated, however, that even those natural forces cannot be discovered by any man who has not obtained the power of getting rid of his personality in some degree. That an emotional desire to help others does not imply this freedom from personality may be seen by the fact that, if you were now perfected in unselfishness in the *real* sense, you would have a conscious existence separate from that of the body and would be able to quit the body at will: in other words, to be free from all sense of self is to be an Adept, for the limitations of self inhibit progress.

"Hear also the words of the Master, taken from Sinnett's *The Occult World*. 'Perhaps you will better appreciate our meaning when told that in our view the highest aspirations for the welfare of humanity become tainted with selfishness if, in the mind of the philanthropist, there lurks the shadow of a desire for self-benefit or a tendency to do injustice, even when these exist unconsciously to himself.'

While setting forth these facts, as well as the dan-

gers and difficulties—both those set ones appointed by the laws of the Lodge and the more innumerable ones adjudged by Karma and hastened by the efforts of the neophyte, it should also be stated that the Masters desire to deter no man from entering the path. They are well aware, however, from the repeated trials and records of centuries, and from their knowledge of our racial difficulties, how few are the persons who have any clew to their own real nature, which is the foe they attempt to conquer the moment they become pupils of the occult. Hence They endeavor, so far as Karma permits, to hold unfit individuals back from rash ventures, the results of which would recoil upon their unbalanced lives and drive them to despair. The powers of evil, inadequately defied by the ignorant man, revenge themselves upon him as well as upon his friends, and not upon those who are above their reach. Although these powers are not hideous objective shapes coming in tangible ways, they are none the less real and dangerous. Their descent in such instances cannot be prevented; *it is Karma*.

“To lose all sense of self, then, implies the loss of all that ordinary men most value in themselves. It therefore behooves you to seriously consider these points:

“1st. What is your motive in desiring to be a chela? You think that motive is well known to you, whereas it is hidden deep within you, and by that hidden motive you will be judged. It has flared up from unseen regions upon men sure of themselves, has belched out in some lurid thought or deed of which they esteemed themselves incapable, and has overthrown their life or reason. Therefore test yourself ere Karma tests you.

“2d. What the place and duties of a true neophyte are.

“When you have seriously considered both for

twenty-one days, you may, if your desire remains firm, take a certain course open to you. It is this.

“Although you do not now know where you can offer yourself to Masters themselves as a chela on probation, yet, in forming that desire in your heart and in re-affirming it (if you do) after due consideration of these points, you have then to some extent called upon the Law, and it is within your power to constitute yourself a disciple, so far as in you lies, through the purity of your motive and effort *if both are sufficiently sustained*. No one can fix a period when this effort will bear fruit, and, if your patience and faith are not strong enough to bear you through an *unlimited* (so far as you know) period of unselfish work for humanity, you had better resign your present fancy, for it is then no more than that. But if otherwise, you are to work for the spiritual enlightenment of Humanity in and through the Theosophical Society (which much needs such laborers), and in all other modes and planes as you best can, remembering the word of Masters: ‘He who does what he can and all that he can, and all that he knows how to do, does enough for us.’ This task includes that of divesting yourself of all personality through interior effort, because that work, if done in the right spirit, is even more important to the race than any outward work we can do. Living as you now are, on the outward plane chiefly, your work is due there and is to be done there until your growth shall fit you to pass away from it altogether.

In following this course you work towards a fixed point under observation,—as is, indeed, the whole Theosophic body, which is now, *as a body*, a chela of Masters, but specialized from other members in the sense that your definite aim and trust are understood and taken into consideration by the unseen Founders and the Law. The Theosophical Society then stands to you, for the time being, as any older chela might

who was appointed for you to aid and to work under. *You are not*, understand, a chela on probation, since no one without authority can confer or announce such a privilege. But if you succeed in lifting yourself and others spiritually, it will be known, *no matter what the external silence may seem to be*, and you will receive your full dues from Those who are honest debtors and ministers of the Just and Perfect Law. You must be ready to work, to wait, and to aspire in *silence*, just as all do who have fixed their eyes on this goal. Remember that your truest adviser is to be found, and constantly sought, *within yourself*. Only by experience can you learn to know its voice from that of natural instinct or mere logic, and strengthen this power, by virtue of which the Masters have become what They are.

“Your choice or rejection of this course is the first test of yourself. Others will follow, whether you are aware of them or not, for the first and only right of the neophyte is—*to be tried*. Hence silence and sorrow follow his acceptance instead of the offer of prompt aid for which he looks. Yet even that shall not be wanting; those trials and reverses will come only from the Law to which you have appealed.”

J. N.

XV.

DEAR JASPER:



GAVE your letter to a distressed soul: she returned thanks, saying it was a cooling draught to one athirst. The thanks of course are yours. Now this lady says it was refreshment to the weary, that letter. True, or she would not say it. But it was not so to me nor to you.

We needed it not. But she illustrates a certain state of progress. She is not yet where we are; but which is happier? She is happier, but poorer in hope. We are not all too happy, but are rich in hope, knowing the prize at the end of time, and not deterred by the clouds, the storms, the miasms and dreadful beasts of prey that line the road. Let us, then, at the very outset wash out of our souls all desire for reward, all hope that we may attain. For so long as we thus hope and desire, we shall be separated from the Self. If in the Self all things *are*, then we cannot wish to be something which we can only compass by excluding something else.

So being beyond this lady so grateful, we find that everything we meet on this illusory plane of existence is a lure that in one way or another has power to draw us out of our path. That is the point we are at, and we may call it the point where lures of Maya have omnipresent power. Therefore we must beware of the illusions of matter.

Before we got to this stage we knew well the fateful lure, the dazzling mirror of the elemental Self, here and there in well-defined places, and intrenched as it was, so to say, in strongly-marked defenses. Those we assaulted; and that was what it desired, for it did think that it then had no need to exercise the enchantment which is hard because so subtle, and so distributed here and there that we find no citadels to take, no battalions in array. But now our dearest friends are unconsciously in league with the deceptive in nature. How strongly do I realize the dejection of Arjuna as he let his bow drop from his hand and sat down on his chariot in despair. But he had a sure spot to rest upon. He used his own. He had Krishna near, and he might fight on.

So in passing along those stages where the grateful lady and others are, we may perhaps have found one spot we may call our own and possess no other

qualification for the task. That spot is enough. It is our belief in the Self, in Masters: it is the little flame of intuition we have allowed to burn, that we have fostered with care.

Then come these dreadful lures. They are, in fact, but mere carcasses, shells of monsters from past existences, offering themselves that we may give them life to terrify us as soon as we have entered them either by fear or love. No matter which way we enter, whether by attachment or by repugnant horror, it is all one: they are in one case vivified by a lover; in the other by a slave who would be free but cannot.

Here it is the lure of enjoyment of natural pleasures, growing out of life's physical basis; there it is self-praise, anger, vanity, what not? Even these beautiful hills and river, they mock one, for they live on untrammelled. Perhaps they do not speak to us because they know the superiority of silence. They laugh with each other at us in the night, amused at the wild struggle of this petty man who would pull the sky down. Ach! God of Heaven! And all the sucklings of Theosophy wish that some great, well-diplomæd Adept would come and open the secret box; but they do not imagine that other students have stepped on the spikes that defend the entrance to the way that leads to the gate of the Path. But we will not blame them, nor yet wish for the things—the special lots—that some of them have abstracted, because now that we know the dreadful power that despair and doubt and violated conscience have, we prefer to prepare wisely and carefully, and not rush in like fools where angels do not pass uninvited.

But, Companion, I remind you of the power of the lure. This Path passes along under a sky and in a clime where every weed grows a yard in the night. It has no discrimination. Thus even after weeks or months of devotion, or years of work, we are sur-

prised at small seeds of vanity or any other thing which would be easily conquered in other years of inattentive life, but which seem now to arise as if helped by some damnable intelligence. This great power of self-illusion is strong enough to create a roaring torrent or a mountain of ice between us and our Masters.

In respect to the question of sex. It is, as you know, given much prominence by both women and men to the detriment of the one sex or the other, or of any supposed sex. There are those who say that the female sex is not to be thought of in the spirit; that all is male. Others say the same for the female. Now both are wrong. In the True there is no sex, and when I said "There all men are women and all women are men," I was only using rhetoric to accentuate the idea that neither one nor the other was predominant, but that the two were coalesced, so to say, into *one*. In the same way you might say, "men are animals there and *vice versa*." Mind, this is in regard to Spirit, and not in regard to the psychical states. For in the psychical states there are still distinctions, as the psychical, though higher than the material, is not as high as Spirit, for it still partakes of matter. For in the Spirit or Atma *all* experiences of *all* forms of life and death are found at once, and he who is one with the Atma knows the whole manifested Universe at once. I have spoken of this condition before as the Turya or fourth state.

When I say that the female *principle* represents matter, I do not mean *women*, for they in any one or more cases may be full of the masculine principle, and *vice versa*.

Matter is illusionary and vain, and so the female element is illusionary and vain, as well as tending to the *established order*.* So in the *Kaballa* it is said that the woman is a wall about the man. A balance

* Through its negative or passive quality.—J. N.

is necessary, and that balance is found in women, or the woman element. You can easily see that the general tendency of women is to keep things as they are and not to have change. Woman—not here and there women—has never been the pioneer in great reforms. Of course many single individual women have been, but the tendency of the great mass of the women has always been to keep things as they are until the men have brought about the great change. This is why women always support any established religion, no matter what,—Christian, Jewish, Buddhist, or Brahmin. The Buddhist women are as much believers in their religion and averse from changing it as are their Christian sisters opposed in the mass to changing theirs.

Now as to telling which element predominates in any single person, it is hard to give a general test rule. But perhaps it might be found in whether a person is given to abstract or concrete thought, and similarly whether given to mere superficial things or to deep fundamental matters. But you must work that out, I think, for yourself.

Of course in the spiritual life no organ *disappears*, but we must find out what would be the mode of operation of any organ in its spiritual counterpart. As I understand, the spiritual counterparts of the organs are *powers*, and not organs, as the eye is the power to see, the ear the power to hear, and so on. The generative organs would then become the creative power and perhaps the Will. You must not suppose that in the spirit life the organs are reproduced as we see them.

One instance will suffice. One may see pictures in the astral light through the back of the head or the stomach. In neither place is there any eye, yet we see. It must be by the power of seeing, which in the material body needs the specialized place or specializing organ known as the eye. We hear often

through the head without the aid of the auricular apparatus, which shows us that there is the power of hearing and of transmitting and receiving sounds without the aid of an external ear or its inside cerebral apparatus. So of course all these things survive in that way. Any other view is grossly material, leading to a deification of this unreal body, which is only an image of the reality, and a poor one at that.

In thinking over these matters you ought always to keep in mind the three plain distinctions of *physical, psychical, and spiritual, always remembering that the last includes the other two*. All the astral things are of the psychical nature, which is partly material and therefore very deceptive. But all are necessary, for they are, they exist.

The Deity is subject to this law, or rather it is the law of the Deity. The Deity desires experience or self-knowledge, which is only to be attained by stepping, so to say, aside from self. So the Deity produces the manifested universes consisting of matter, psychical nature, and spirit. In the Spirit alone resides the great consciousness of the whole; and so it goes on ever producing and drawing into Itself, accumulating such vast and enormous experiences that the pen falls down at the thought. How can that be put into language? It is impossible, for we at once are met with the thought that the Deity must know all at all times. Yet there is a vastness and an awe-inspiring influence in this thought of the Day and Night of Brahman. It is a thing to be thought over in the secret recesses of the heart, and not for discussion. *It is the All.*

And now, my Brother, for the present I leave you. May your restored health enable you to do more work for the world.

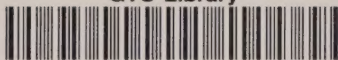
I salute you, my Brother, and wish you to reach the terrace of enlightenment.

Z.

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